Beyond
the
Pipeline

WOMEN'S RESEARCH CENTRE
DECEMBER 1979

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'BEYOND THE PIPELINE'

A study of the lives of women and their families in Fort Nelson, British Columbia, and Whitehorse, Yukon Territory; and an identification of their socio-economic concerns resulting from the proposed construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline.

FOR: The Northern Pipeline Agency

BY: The Women's Research Centre

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS i

MAPS iii

PREFACE vi

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS xii

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1
  1.1 Research rationale 1
  1.2 Contract terms of reference 2
  1.3 Research context 2
  1.4 Research methodology 5
  1.5 Research description 7
    1.5.1 Time frame
    1.5.2 Research staff
    1.5.3 Description of work undertaken
  1.6 Need for further work 11

2.0 WOMEN IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES 13
  2.1 Community descriptions 13
    A. Fort Nelson
    B. Whitehorse
  2.2 Women's perspective on their community 24
    2.2.1 Positive aspects of life in northern communities 29
    2.2.2 Negative aspects of life in northern communities 30
  2.3 Basic community services from the perspective of women 41
    2.3.1 Health services 42
      A. Fort Nelson
      B. Whitehorse
    2.3.2 Mental health services 53
      A. Fort Nelson
      B. Whitehorse
    2.3.3 Adult education 61
    2.3.4 Recreational and cultural activities 64
      A. Fort Nelson
      B. Whitehorse
    2.3.5 Freedom from fear - crime and police protection services 69
      A. Fort Nelson
      B. Whitehorse
    2.3.6 Transportation services 79
      A. Services to the 'outside'
      B. Services inside Fort Nelson and Whitehorse
  2.4 Summary 85

3.0 THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - COMMUNITY PLANNING AND HOUSING 88
- 3.1 Community planning 89
- 3.2 Summary - community planning 95
- 3.3 Women and housing 95
  - 3.3.1 Introduction 95
  - 3.3.2 Housing needs 96
    - A. Location of housing 96
    - B. House size 99
    - C. Type, quality and cost of housing 100
  - 3.3.3 The current housing situation 103
    - A. Building a home 104
      - i. Cost and availability of land
      - ii. Quality of construction
    - B. Buying a home 115
    - C. Rental accommodation 120
    - D. Government housing 128
    - E. Mobile homes 131
- 3.4 Summary-housing needs 134

4.0 WOMEN AND THEIR WORK 138
- 4.1 Introduction 138
- 4.2 Women's work in the home 138
  - 4.2.1 Household Maintenance 141
    - A. Shopping 141
      - i. Whitehorse
      - ii. Fort Nelson
    - B. Summary - shopping 153
  - 4.2.2 Women and the Family: Family Maintenance 153
    - A. Partner 154
    - B. Summary - partner 160
    - C. Children 161
      - i. Health 163
      - ii. Education 165
      - iii. Childcare 175
      - iv. Recreation 182
    - C. Summary - children 187
  - 4.2.3 Summary - women's work in the home 187
- 4.3 Voluntary work 191
- 4.4 Women's work for wages 192
  - 4.4.1 Introduction 192
  - 4.4.2 Opportunities for employment 193
  - 4.4.3 Barriers to employment for women 196
  - 4.4.4 The employment situation for married women and single women 201
  - 4.4.5 Summary - women's work outside the home 206

5.0 WOMEN AND THE PIPELINE 209
5.1 Introduction 209
5.2 Pipeline employment for women 213
5.3 Pipeline employment for family and community 219
5.4 Pipeline impact on education, medical and social services 225
5.5 Pipeline impact on cost of living 231
5.6 Pipeline impact on business 234
5.7 Pipeline impact on housing 236
5.8 Pipeline impact on crime 238
5.9 Pipeline impact on women and the family 241
5.10 Pipeline impact on the community 244
5.11 Summary - women and the pipeline 247

APPENDIXES 252
A - Alaska Highway gas pipeline project ownership
B - The Northern Pipeline Agency
C - Aide memoire utilized by interviewers
D - Interviews with women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse - demographic information
E - Contacts made by researchers during phase II of research project

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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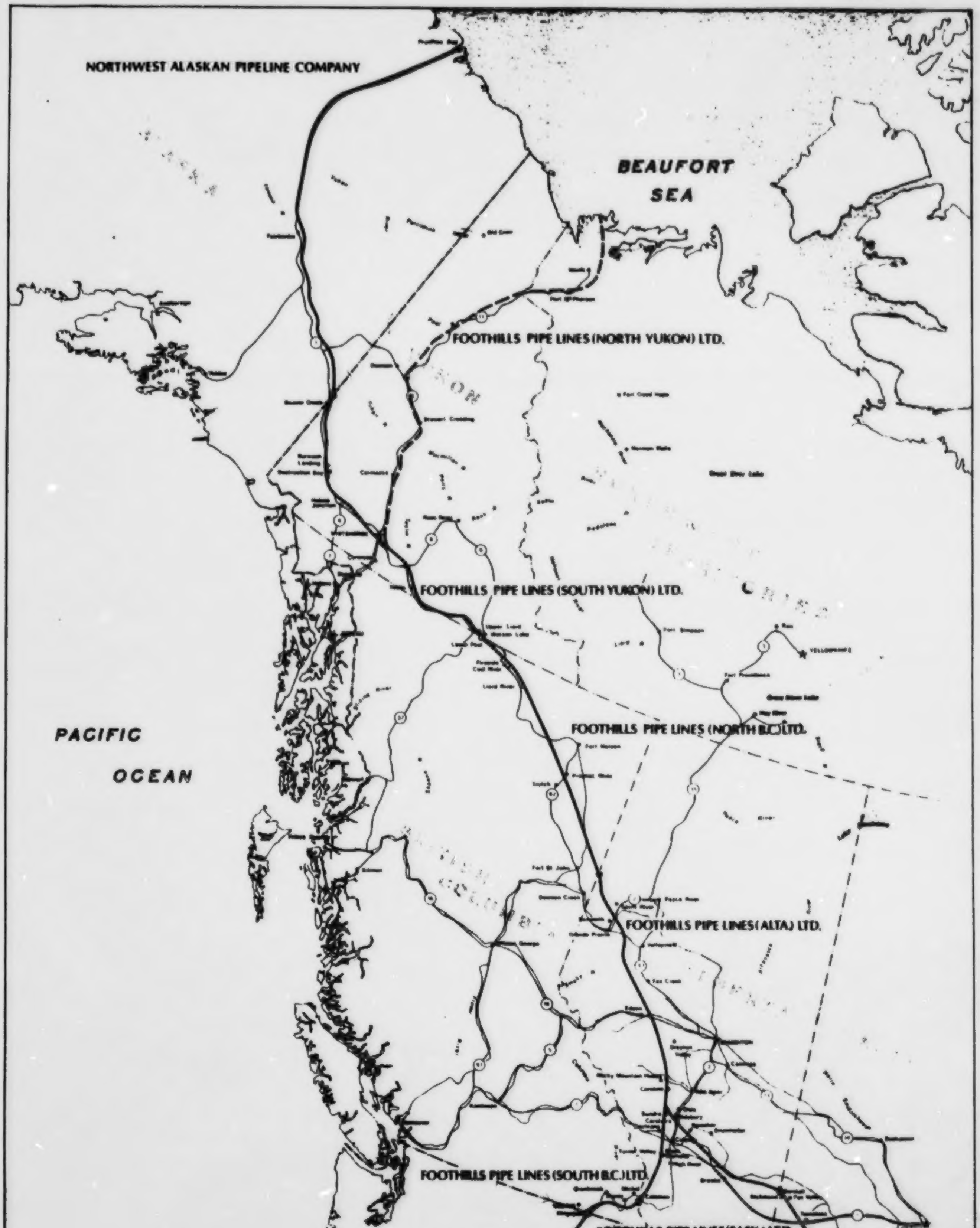
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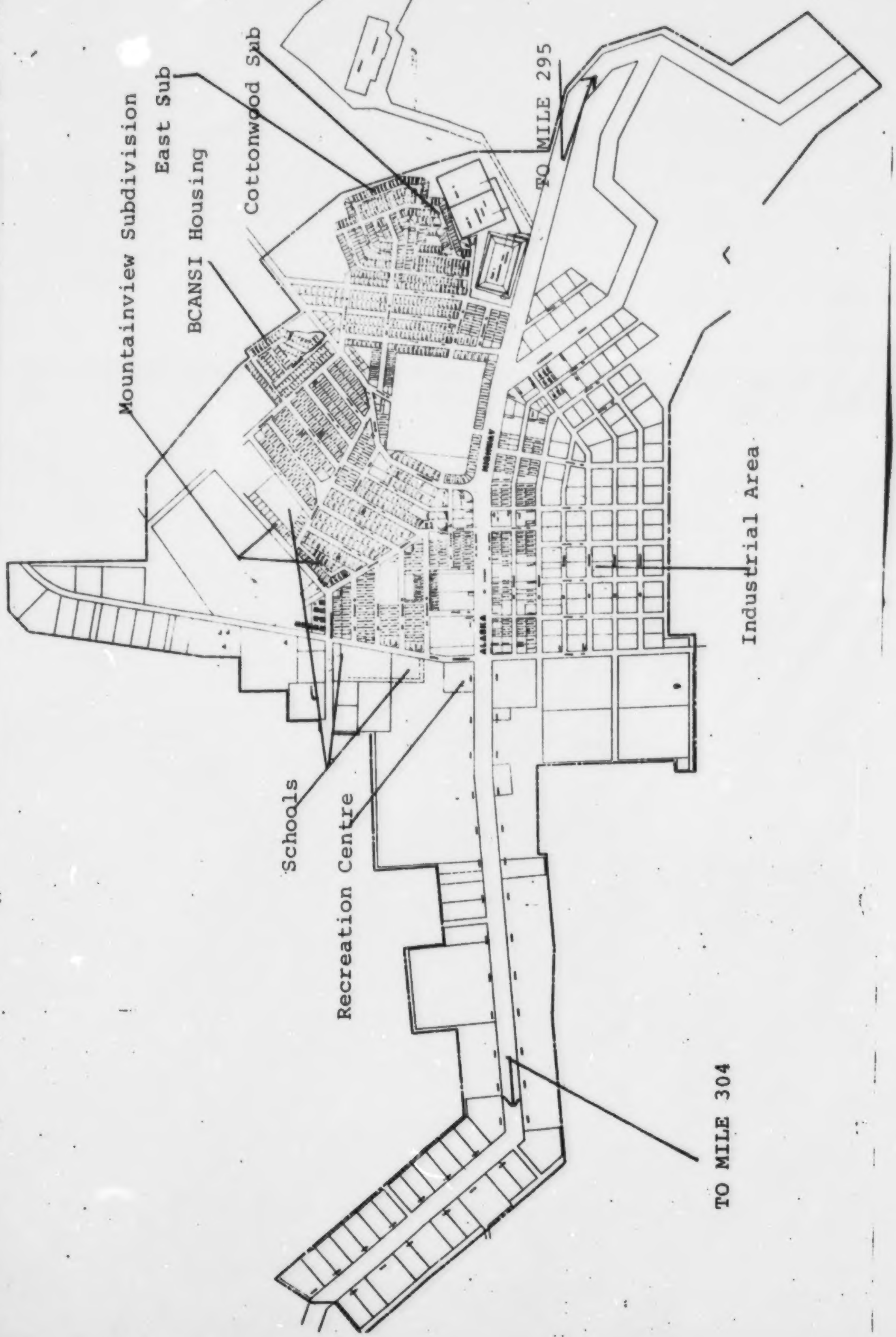
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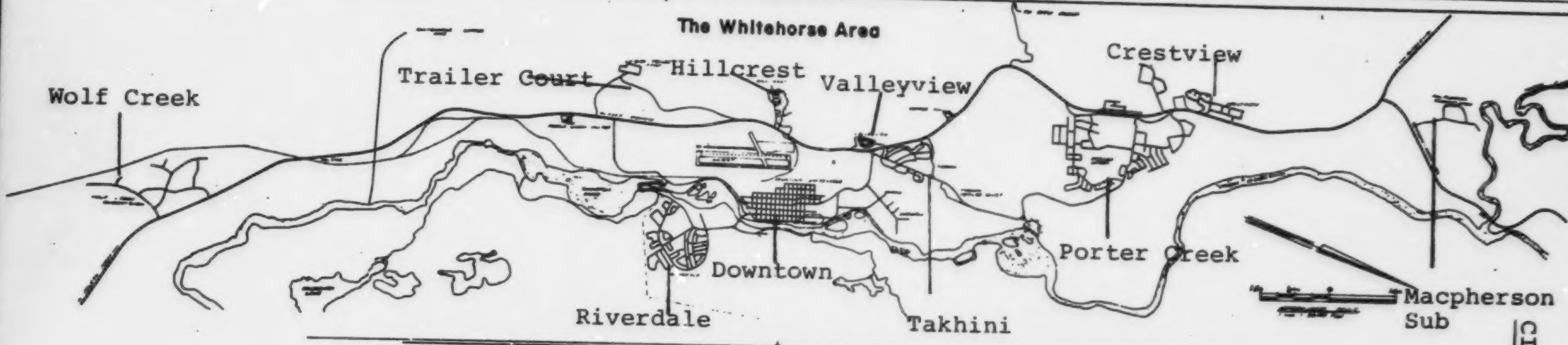
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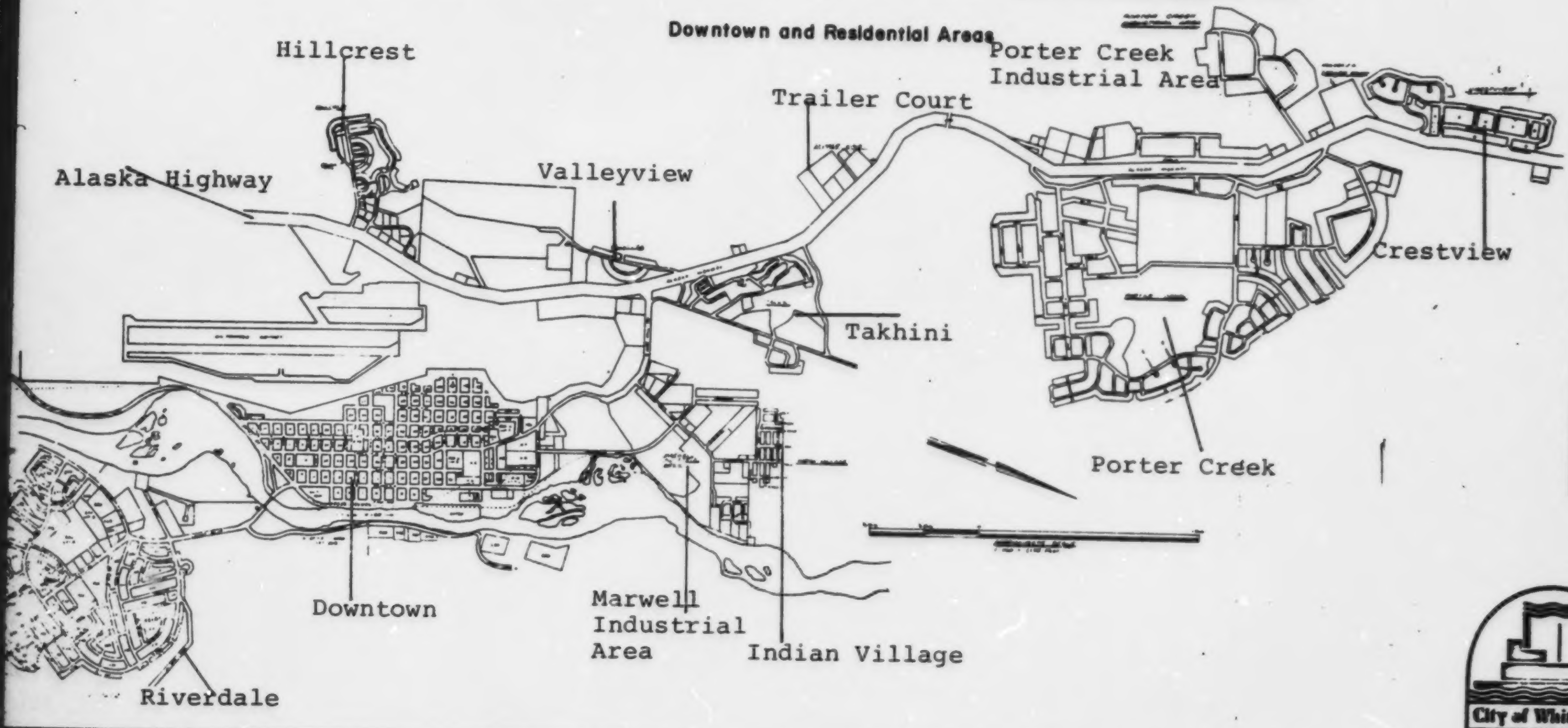
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Riverdale

City of Whitehorse

PREFACE

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

Energy is an international and household catchword. Billions of corporate and political dollars are invested in the search for and control of energy. The history of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline project is a long one. Discussion and debate about the feasibility of transporting Alaskan gas and oil to U.S. markets (south of the 49th parallel) through Canada began in 1968, after huge oil and gas discoveries were made in Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope.

Since that time many proposals have been advanced to address the problem of transporting the oil and gas from the northern edge of the continent to U.S. markets. The transporting of these resources over such a distance has generated the largest private capital undertaking in Canada's history, and the effect of decisions made about transportation methods and locations will have an impact upon adjacent populations. Many studies have been completed and inquiries commissioned to examine the nature and consequences of each proposal put forward by the companies who want to construct the transportation systems.

One oil pipeline, the Alyeska Line, has already been constructed. It moves oil across Alaska from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. The oil is then conveyed by tanker down the coast of British Columbia. Tanker traffic along the B.C. coast has caused much concern. The West Coast Oil Ports Inquiry was directed to determine the effects of an oil port at Kitimat, and the Inquiry encountered great public opposition to increased tanker traffic.

There has been a series of proposals to construct pipelines across Canada to deliver Prudhoe Bay gas to the United States. Most of these proposals involve the construction of a pipeline across the northern Yukon and down the Mackenzie Valley, especially after the major gas finds in the Mackenzie Delta region in 1971.

The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, chaired by Mr. Justice Thomas Berger, was set up in 1974 to consider the social, environmental and economic impacts of a gas pipeline and energy corridor in the Mackenzie Valley and Western Arctic. In August 1976 applications were filed with the National Energy Board and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to construct the Canadian portion of what was then called the Alcan Project. The Alcan Project involved the construction of a pipeline to transport Alaskan gas to U.S. markets by an overland route through the Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.

In April 1977 the Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry, chaired by Dean Lysyk, was established by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to identify the principal social and economic implications of the project for the Yukon Territory. In May 1977 Mr. Justice Berger released volume one of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. He recommended a ten year moratorium on the building of any pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley, and suggested there might be fewer environmental difficulties with the Alcan project's intended route through the Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.

In July 1977, the National Energy Board recommended approval of the Alcan project and in August 1977 the Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry delivered its findings to the federal government. Canada and the United States signed an agreement on 'principles applicable to a northern gas agreement' in September 1977. The federal government introduced legislation into the House of Commons in February 1978 to approve the Alaska Highway gas pipeline and to establish the Northern Pipeline Agency. The Northern Pipeline Agency was to oversee the planning and construction of the Canadian portion of the pipeline. This legislation was given royal assent in April 1978.

The construction of the Canadian portion of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline is the responsibility of Foothills Pipe Line (Yukon) Ltd., of Calgary. The company's corporate structure is outline in Appendix A. The purpose of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline is to transport natural gas from Prudhoe Bay to markets in California and the midwestern United States. The proposal as designed represents the largest mainline transmission system for natural gas in North America. The project will comprise 4,786 miles of 56, 48, 42 and 36 inch pipe of which 2,027 miles will be in Canada, 731 miles in Alaska and 2,028 miles in the United States south of the 49th parallel. Estimate of the project's cost vary, but in November 1978 the cost was approximated at 12 billion dollars for the entire project.

Some 439 miles of 56" mainline will be routed through northern British Columbia, and 105 miles of the 36" western branch will be routed across southeastern British Columbia. The Yukon section of the pipeline will consist of 266 miles of 48" pipe south to Whitehorse and 251 miles of 56" pipe from Whitehorse to the British Columbia border. The total cost of the Canadian section, including pipeline in Alberta and Saskatchewan, has been estimated at 5.7 billion dollars. (Northern Times, 18 May 1978)

The section of the pipeline to be built in the Yukon and northern British Columbia is part of phase two of the entire project. Phase one is the 'pre-building' of the pipeline through southeastern British Columbia.

Phase three consists of the construction of the Dempster Lateral, a pipeline that would connect the Alaska Highway gas pipeline with gas in the Mackenzie Delta. The timing of phase two construction was described by Mr. E.A. Mirosh, Vice-President (Engineering) of Foothills Pipe Line Company, in an address to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association in September 1978. Although delays have changed the dates he cites, the description still indicates the time needed to complete phase two of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline:

> "The remaining construction of pipeline facilities in Canada would take place during 1982 and 1983, requiring an additional 21 spread seasons of activity, peaking with 8 spreads in the field during the summer of 1983. Sixteen additional mainline compressor stations will be constructed over the years 1982 and 1983."

Mr. Mirosh described the construction of a natural gas pipeline such as the Alaska Highway gas pipeline in his speech to the Manufacturers' Association:

> "Such a typical natural gas pipeline would be constructed by men and equipment made up into pipeline spreads and stations construction crews. In remote locations such spreads and crews would be housed in camps and would generally work in most seasons of the year depending on the specific project requirements.
>
> The pipeline spread would be made up of several hundred men involved in such activities as clearing and grading the right-of-way, preparing the pipeline ditch, stringing the pipe along the right-of-way, bending the pipe, welding it, testing the welds, and finally coating the pipe, lowering it into the ditch, backfilling the ditch and cleaning up the right-of-way.
>
> Although a pipeline spread could extend over several miles of construction, it could be geared to move or progress at between one half and one mile a day over typical terrain. A spread could be in the field three months in

> the winter time and/or six months in the summer to accomplish its contract which would typically be 50 to 100 miles in length."

It has been estimated that 8,000 workers will be working on the pipeline during the peak construction period. (Northern Times, May 18, 1979) The Alaska Highway gas pipeline is the largest capital project undertaken by private industry in Canada's history. The governments of Canada and the United States have had to create and pass legislation to enable this pipeline to be constructed. It is not surprising then,considering the scope of this project and the proximity of the pipeline to their communities, that all the women of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse who were interviewed for this report already knew of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline and had considered what its impact on the communities would be.

Along any proposed transportation corridor the needs of the people affected by such massive development must be considered since the stability and quality of their lives could be seriously damaged. While the problem of moving Alaskan oil and gas may be a purely financial problem for most people in the south, those who actually live in areas adjacent to a proposed pipeline are compelled to raise many other concerns about the effect of development upon their community and lifestyle. They have a legitimate desire to see such large scale development benefit them and future generations of the north, at least as much as it benefits the companies who develop the resource and those who consume it.

This report is entitled 'Beyond the Pipeline'. Such a title was chosen to clearly indicate that the impact of pipeline development does not end when the construction is finished. Women and their families in Fort Nelson and

Whitehorse are already being affected by pre-pipeline activity; their lives will be profoundly influenced during pipeline construction; and the impact of the pipeline upon them and their communities will continue long after the gas begins to move south.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the Northern Pipeline Agency's major responsibilities is to "maximize the social and economic benefits from the construction and operation of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline" and to minimize "any adverse effect on the social and environmental conditions of the area most directly affected by the pipeline." To fulfill this responsibility the Agency must assess the potential impact of pipeline construction on the communities in the area. The Northern Pipeline Agency's contract with the Women's Research Centre is one element of these pipeline impact assessment exercises.

The Women's Research Centre has undertaken an empirical study. Our field researchers are residents of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Our informants in these communities were asked to comment - from their own experience as residents - on issues of concern to them in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. They were also asked to anticipate the impact of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline upon their communities.

Our primary goal in undertaking the research for this report has been to provide a description of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse as they exist today, in 1979. This description of the current situation, coupled with informants' assumptions about the effects of pipeline construction, provides a basis for assessing the impact of the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline. However, to list issues of concern out of context in conclusions and recommendations would do our informants a disservice. The issues must be viewed in conjunction with the overall context of life in the northern communities of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse described in the body of this report.

The conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from this research fall into three categories. They are: (A) Impact assessment in economic development planning; (B) Immediate action required in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse; and (C) Pipeline planning.

A. Impact assessment in economic development planning

Although impact assessment is currently in vogue among social scientists, it is recognized to be a problematic undertaking with serious limitations. Mim Dixon, in her study 'What Happened to Fairbanks? The Effects of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline on the Community of Fairbanks, Alaska', points out that impact assessment

> "...has generated a multitude of voluminous environmental impact statements and planning documents. After the future becomes the past, few of the documents are examined to evaluate the accuracy of the predictions they contain or the processes by which those predictions were made."
>
> (Dixon, p. 258)

Dixon analyzes several approaches to impact assessment and suggests alternatives that should be considered. She notes that the current model for predicting social impacts is based on two assumptions; specifically that impact is a linear quantitative function of the existing situation, and that communities are passive recipients of change. Yet neither of these assumptions has been validated by the Fairbanks experience. (Dixon, p. 265)

Thomas Berger pointed out, in the report on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry, 'Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland', that socio-economic impact is a complex exercise with inherent limitations:

> "It is all too easy to be overconfident of our ability to act as social engineers and to suppose - quite wrongly - that all problems can be forseen and resolved. The nature of human affairs often defies planners. In the case of a vast undertaking like the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, overconfidence in our ability to anticipate and manage social problems would be foolish and dangerous."
>
> (Berger, p. 161)

More accurate methods of assessing the impact of pipeline development are needed. The assessment of the impact of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline is aggravated by the fact that the impact is being assessed after the application to build the pipeline has been approved and tentative dates have been set for construction to begin.

Furthermore, Canada's approach to impact assessment has generally been an "ad-hoc response", according to Andrew Thompson, Commissioner of the Westcoast Oil Ports Inquiry. (Thompson, p. 111)

However, an even more serious problem is the general approach of economic development planners. They consider the social infrastructure - the social and political structures of a community, residence patterns and family life - to be exogenous factors. Thus they do not take these factors into account in impact assessment. The main factors considered by economic development planners in assessing impact are those of labour, transportation and the environment. They are usually interpreted very narrowly. Labour is seen in terms of the number of workers required for construction, with little concern for the impact of an influx of workers upon a community and little concern for the workers' employment conditionsand the effect of such conditions on the workers' families. Transportation is viewed in terms of the problem of transporting construction materials, the transportation of the workers who are needed to extract the resource, and the transporting of the resource itself. The environment is assessed in order to determine what it will accommodate: for example, is it feasible to build a pipeline on permafrost?

There are advantages to this technological orientation of economic development planners. It is far cheaper and easier to deal with technological factors than with people and communities. It appears that the important factors in economic development planning are the logs, the gas, the oil, the hydro - and not the people.

It is generally recognized, however, that economic development will have considerable impact on commerce and the environment, and, therefore, to some extent on a community. What is not recognized is the impact such development will have on women and their families. The women interviewed for this report commented on the effects on their lives of the environment, community planning, housing, the delivery of goods and services, transportation and changes in the labour force. Their comments made clear the link that exists between the public world of commerce and development and the private world of home and family. Thus the impact of development on women and their families is made evident.

The impact of a development such as the Alaska Highway gas pipeline on the residents of communities in its path must be incorporated into planning for development. Therefore, a shift in economic development policy is required.

RECOMMENDATION:

That social infrastructure components - the social and political structure of communities, residence patterns and family life - be integral factors in economic development planning.

B. Immediate action required in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse

Our research has identified several factors that must be integrated into planning for construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline, and into planning for the ongoing development of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Basic community services are inadequate. The following are examples of current problems:

Access to good quality health care is not a reality for women and their families in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. The lack of resident specialists is a major concern. Special education programs are needed for exceptional children who are particularly gifted or have a learning disability or handicap. Adult education programs, with childcare provisions, are required by women seeking to upgrade their skills or obtain training for non-traditional jobs. High prices and low quality of basic foods make it difficult for families to meet their nutritional needs. There is a housing emergency in Fort Nelson and a shortage of affordable single family homes in Whitehorse. Transportation to the 'outside' is expensive and schedules are inconvenient, thereby heightening the isolation of the communities. The crime rate is rising and women said they do not feel safe in their communities.

Despite all the concerns raised by our informants, the only explanation offered by representatives of the institutions responsible for the inadequqcy of services is geographic isolation. Apparently the fact that Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are northern communities is accepted as justification for low standards of service. Northerners are expected to accept the romantic mystique of the north. They are told they must be tough to endure. They are told to move to southern cities if they want higher standards of service and care. However, geographic isolation is not an acceptable justification for inadequate goods and services. It is hoped that the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline will bring benefits to Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, principally in the form of improved services. At the same time it is feared that pipeline construction will further strain existing services.

CONCLUSION:

Regardless of whether the Alaska Highway gas pipeline is constructed, existing services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse must be improved.

Living in northern communities makes particular demands on residents. Housing must be constructed in congruence with the environment, and must provide indoor play space for children, room for families to entertain at home and storage space for goods that must be purchased in bulk.

The National Building Code must be amended to include specific northern standards for home design and construction.

Depression, loneliness and cabin fever are prevalent in the north, particularly among women. Mental health services must be developed in accordance with these northern realities. Adult education programs are required that reflect the need for the training of women for non-traditional jobs. In addition, adult education programs that meet women's need for social interaction and intellectual stimulation are required to combat cabin fever, depression and isolation.

Affordable recreation programs housed in indoor facilities are needed in recognition of the particular importance of recreation in isolated northern communities that experience extreme winter weather.

A public transportation system is a necessity in northern towns to increase women's access to basic community services. At present there is no public transit system in Fort Nelson.

Community design and planning initiatives must reflect the special importance of community stability in isolated northern communities. The physical layout of Whitehorse and Fort Nelson, in fact, detracts from community stability and also decreases residents' access to goods and services.

The north offers recognized advantages to its residents. To maximize these advantages, the problems of northern life must be addressed. The development of northern standards is one step towards making the communities more productive and amenable environments in which to live and work.

CONCLUSION:

Northern standards are required for home construction and design, mental health services, adult education, recreation programs and facilities, transportation services and community planning.

C. Pipeline planning

There is little evidence of pipeline planning in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse on the part of governments, institutions, businesses and services. One reason for this may be the fact that economic development planners contend development projects do not affect the community. However, this report clearly shows that pipeline construction will affect Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Furthermore, as Dixon has stated, failure to consider community planning for development "reinforces a sense of powerlessness on the part of the local community. That sense of powerlessness can lead to failure to respond, which in turn exacerbates the impacts." (Dixon, p. 269)

Another explanation for the lack of planning at the community level is the possibility that planning is under way at the provincial, territorial or federal level but has not yet percolated down to the community. Dixon states this was the case in Fairbanks, and it led to serious negative consequences. Decisions were made "outside the community but the community had to bear the responsibilities for coping with the consequences of those decisions. The inherent structure of the community meant that it could not cope effectively in many situations." (Dixon, p. 293)

Given the current inadequacies of existing community services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, the need for planning to maximize the advantages of pipeline construction is urgent. Failure to take immediate planning initiatives will result not only in the loss of potential advantages, but also in an inability to mitigate against negative impacts of pipeline construction. Coping with impacts after the fact becomes, in effect, a process of crisis intervention.

To forestall the negative consequences of insufficient planning, the federal government, through the Northern Pipeline Agency, must place specific conditions on the Company constructing the pipeline and encourage the appropriate municipal, territorial or provincial governments to take responsible action.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Foothills not be permitted to begin construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline until the necessary social services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse have been provided by the appropriate levels of government.

If these services are not provided, Fort Nelson and Whitehorse will face a situation where crisis intervention is their only recourse. Not only will this situation contribute to a general sense of powerlessness in the community, individual residents will suffer personally.

People are educated to believe they must suffer to have progress. Therefore, they try personally to cope with the impacts of economic development. They are encouraged to blame themselves if they have difficulty coping with changes in the social infrastructure due to even the most obvious external factors, such as the construction of a pipeline.

Traditionally, it is a community's voluntary organizations that are expected to assist residents and ameliorate problem situations when governments and the private sector fail to respond. Voluntary organizations, like their individual members, receive little support. Meeting the challenges a development project such as the construction of a pipeline presents is considered their automatic response for "the good of the community". Local women's voluntary organizations in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse have developed compensatory services such as women's centres, a Transition House, and the Whitehorse mini-bus system to fill gaps in existing community services. These organizations receive little financial support from government or industry. They are typical of community voluntary organizations that will bear the brunt of inadequate pre-pipeline planning. Their role and contribution must be recognized.

RECOMMENDATION:

That financial support be provided for local voluntary organizations in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse to assist them in ameliorating negative impacts of pipeline construction on community services.

Assuming that the above mentioned recommendations are implemented, as yet unforeseen changes in the social infrastructure are, nevertheless, likely to occur as pipeline construction proceeds. As Berger pointed out, "the nature of human affairs often defies the planners." A mechanism for contingency planning is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION:

That an impact information centre, staffed by local residents whose interest is the welfare of the community, be established. The impact information centre should serve as a source of independent information-sharing, and should monitor the impact of pipeline construction in order to propose contingency plans to deal with currently unforeseen impacts.

These conclusions and recommendations are not definitive. They are a beginning. There are no simple solutions to existing problems in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Nor is it certain what the impact of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline will be upon the communities. Many of our informants hope the pipeline will benefit their communities. Northern Canadians have a legitimate right to expect this economic development project will bring them maximum social and economic benefits. They have a right to expect that adverse effects will be minimal. These rights are written in the law, in the act that established the Northern Pipeline Agency. The Agency must take appropriate action to meet the expectations of Canadian citizens who stand to suffer the consequences of construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH RATIONALE

The Northern Pipeline Agency functions as a 'single window' for all federal government responsibilities related to the Alaska Highway gas pipeline project in Canada. (See Appendix B for a description of the Agency) The Northern Pipeline Agency is responsible for developing socio-economic and environmental terms and conditions for the pipeline; setting up monitoring routines for pipeline construction; addressing company plans; and liasing with all levels of government. In undertaking the above, the Northern Pipeline Agency must maintain its legislated committment:

> "...to maximize the social and economic benefits from the construction and operation of the pipeline including the maximizing of the opportunities for employment of Canadians while at the same time minimizing any adverse effect on the social and environmental conditions of the areas most directly affected by the pipeline."
>
> (Northern Pipeline Act, p. 3)

It is therefore the responsibility of the Agency to ensure the concerns of all segments of the communities that will be affected by the construction of the pipeline will be included in its considerations.

This research project was designed to obtain women's perspectives on family and community life in Fort Nelson, B.C. and Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, two communities which will be affected by the Alaska Highway gas pipeline. The resulting description and analysis, by women, of their life and work in the home and community provides the Northern Pipeline Agency with information necessary to make recommendations to maximize the social and economic benefits and reduce adverse effects of the project on women and families.

1.2. CONTRACT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of the contract signed between the Northern Pipeline Agency and the Women's Research Centre were as follows:

> "To endeavour to ascertain and identify the socio-economic issues of present and anticipated concern resulting from the proposed construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline as it will affect women and their familes,"

and to:

> "...produce a final report, and where it considers it appropriate, make recommendations to the Agency to assist the Agency in its ongoing dealings with the governments of the Yukon Territory and Province of British Columbia, and in its review of the Company's plans respecting the construction of the pipeline."

1.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Women have generally been excluded from the public worlds of business, finance, economics and politics. The world of women is seen as the private world of the home, the family, the community around her, and limited areas of the labour force. This exclusion from the public world means that little is known about how women live their lives, and the resulting invisibility of women is reflected in public policies and legislation.

The tendency in research has been to consider the lives and work of women to be less important than the lives and work of men.The stereotyped view of women as homemakers and consumers has prevailed. The study published in 1974 by the Centre for Settlement Studies in Manitoba serves as an example of the restricted way in which women's lives are analyzed and described. Entitled 'The Adequacy of Selected Goods and Services as Evaluated in a Resource Frontier Community', the researchers were charged with investigating why homemakers were dissatisfied with resource towns, the assumption being that homemaker dissatisfaction might rest with the goods available in local stores. Indeed, the women interviewed did have interesting and informative things to say about local goods and consumer services. However, as the report's summary states:

> "Many factors ... may be far more influential than the adequacy of goods and services in producing homemaker discontent. These included needs related to housing ... needs related to the community such as public transportation, public playgrounds, recreation facilities, needs related to the family such as provision of daycare centres and opportunities for personal development of the homemaker and her family."
>
> (Barclay, Baxter et al, p. vii)

Unfortunately, examination of the needs identified above was precluded by the terms of reference of the Centre's study.

However, other research has begun to recognize and refer to the importance of women's perspective on development. In 1975 a group of women in Yellowknife, Northwest Territory, presented a brief to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry in which they stated:

> "Looking at development from a women's point of view is vital. Women are concerned with the human element of development - about what it will do to their children, their homes and their community. Women are the ones who end up coping with the results and effects of development decisions usually made by men."
>
> (Blondin et al, p. 1)

Similar comments were made in the 'Northern British Columbia Women's Task Force Report on Single

Industry Resource Communities' published in 1977:

> "We are convinced that if there is to be any positive change for women in presently existing single industry communities...we must voice our own perceptions of what life is like for us and demand full participation in the planning, governing and evaluating process...we share a real concern that unless our experiences are taken into account, the development plans of industry and government will continue to deliver programs that reinforce women's role as marginal, dependent and unimportant."
>
> ('Northern B.C. Women's Task Force Report on Single Industry Resource Communities',1977, p.2)

Women have begun to organize around the need to address development issues. The Conference on Women and Economic Development, held in Prince George, B.C. in November 1977, brought together women from resource communities throughout B.C. and the Yukon. Their purpose was to investigate and analyze the role of women in the process of economic development. Women from Fort Nelson and Whitehorse attended the conference, and expressed their concern about the impact of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline upon their communities. The resultant discussion during and after the conference, provided the impetus that led to this research project.

A conference of northern women in Sudbury, Ontario in fall 1979 discussed at length the economic development issues affecting Ontario women.

A women's organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario, is now completing the first stage of a provincially funded study which examines the quality of life in resource towns of northwestern Ontario from women's perspective. British Columbia women are seeking research funds to prepare and present appropriate material to the Bates

Inquiry into Uranium Mining in British Columbia. These studies will help make apparent the effect of development on women's lives.

Shortly after the Conference on Women and Economic Develpment in Prince George, the Yukon Status of Women Council approached the federal government for pipeline research funding. In spring 1978, the Yukon Status of Women Council, the Fort Nelson Women's Centre and the Women's Research Centre in Vancouver made presentations to the Parliamentary Select Committee and the Senate Committee both of which were reviewing Bill C-25, the Northern Pipeline Bill. In the summer and the fall of 1978 these three organizations developed a research proposal, and in October 1978 negotiations began with the Northern Pipeline Agency on funding for research into the effects of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline on women and their families. The contract as outlined in Section 1.2 was awarded to the Women's Research Centre in February 1979.

The awarding of this research contract is a result of women's continuing efforts to participate in decisions on economic develpment. This research project is one of the first of its kind to be contracted by government. It is hoped this report will be a useful contribution to the emerging body of material that makes visible women's work and life in the private world of family and community and links that work - and those lives - to the public world of commerce and development.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this report is to outline how women view their lives at present, the problems they currently encounter, and the problems they envisage in the future as conditions around them change. The special concern has been to present issues affecting women living in communities in which changes in the form of development are planned or have already begun to take place. The development in this case is the proposed construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline; and the communities are Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

The approach used in this report was based on the anthropological method of participant observation. This approach starts from the assumption that in order to understand what is happening in a society, a community or a social situation, one needs to participate in it. The aim is to present for others' understanding the situations one has seen, heard or acted in. To varying degrees, the interviewers shared the life experience and community membership of the women being interviewed. This shared experience was used as the basis for selecting women to interview.

Interviews were small scale and intensive, and concentrated on women's interests and experience, and their feelings and conclusions about the conditions of their lives. The aim of the interviewers was to reflect as faithfully as possible the views of women who are residents of the community. They did not ask only for information about pipeline impact, nor did they assume anything about the current situation of the woman being interviewed.

The women's descriptions of their daily activities and their setting provides a basis for understanding the ways in which women as members of the family and household are linked to the community and society at large. The assumption that women do not speak as isolated individuals, but as representatives of families, as managers of households, community members, wives, mothers, heads of families and family members means their concerns are presented as part of the concerns of society, rather than in isolation. While a study of this design, being an exploratory rather than statistical study, cannot, and does not, claim statistical generalisability, it does represent the concerns of those interviewed and provides the basis for an initial understanding of the situation and needs of women and families in a community.

1.5. RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

1.5.1 Time frame

The contract between the Northern Pipeline Agency and the Women's Research Centre provided four months in which research could be undertaken. The first phase of research took place from February 15 to April 14, 1979. The second phase of research occured from May 14 to July 14, 1979. There was a break of one month (April 15 to May 13) between phases one and two of the research.

1.5.2 Research staff

The project was undertaken by the Women's Research Centre in conjunction with the Yukon Status of Women Council and Fort Nelson Women's Centre. The project was co-ordinated by the Women's Research Centre in Vancouver. The Fort Nelson's Women's Centre and Yukon Status of Women Council were responsible for providing a local research team for the project in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse respectively.

In order to meet the focus of the work, each local research team consisted of women who were interested in the effect of pipeline development on women and were resident in the community. Each team consisted of three women who worked with the Women's Research Centre in designing work plans, collecting materials and analyzing data. The research teams were responsible for initiating, completing and writing up all interviews with community informants.

Co-ordination of the project by the Women's Research Centre committee included ongoing liaison with the Northern Pipeline Agency, development of research methodology, communication with and direction of research teams, and the planning and executing of research workshops in Whitehorse, Fort Nelson and Vancouver. The Women's Research Centre committee worked in consultation with Fort Nelson and Whitehorse research teams to prepare the report outline, review quantification material, analyze data, and write the final report.

1.5.3 Description of work undertaken

Phase One: February 15 - April 14, 1979

At the beginning of this phase, research teams were hired by the Fort Nelson Women's Centre and Yukon Status of Women Council; offices were opened in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson. A planning workshop was held in Vancouver in the early weeks of phase one at which time all research staff reviewed the project goals, developed interview methodology and work plans.

Research team members developed a list of possible informants based on their own knowledge of the community, and began with the women they knew personally. The informants were told that interviews were to be confidential and that they would form the basis of a report to be presented to the Northern Pipeline Agency. A coding system was developed to ensure confidentiality.

The purpose of the first phase of interviewing was to obtain from each informant a description of her life, work, family ,community and issues of concern. Certain issues defined in the contract with the Northern Pipeline Agency were raised by the interviewer, and the informant was encouraged to speak to any other matters that she wished. The focus was to facilitate the direct personal accounting of experience.

The interviews were small scale, intensive and open-ended, lasting an average of ninety minutes each. Research teams utilized an aide-memoire to begin each interview (see appendix C). Research team members wrote up each interview as soon as the session was over, using notes taken during the session. This task usually took several hours, depending on the length of the interview.

The interviews were undertaken over a period of six weeks. A total of 116 interviews were completed, 59 from Whitehorse and 57 from Fort Nelson (see Appendix D for demographic breakdown.) At the end of phase one of the project, the research teams and the Women's Research Centre committee met in Whitehorse to identify the main issues raised by the informants and discuss findings. At this time the research staff could only make tentative work plans for phase two of the work as there had been no confirmation from the federal Treasury Board that funds would be available for the second stage of the work. Eventually funding approval was given after a month's delay and research was able to proceed. However, the delay interrupted the flow of work and research staff were without pay for that period.

Phase Two: May 14 - July 14, 1979

The purpose of this phase of the work was to quantify, as far as possible, the qualitative issues raised by informants in the interviews conducted in phase one. This involved examination and description of the mechanisms already in place in the community for the delivery of goods and services; finding out how decisions were made about delivery of those goods and services; and beginning the analysis of where changes could or should be make.

A meeting held in Fort Nelson at the beginning of this phase enabled research staff to review phase one interviews and decide which institutions and organizations should be contacted to quantify the areas of qualitative concern. The rest of phase two was taken up with the interviewing of representatives of these organizations and institutions and in the collection and review of other pertinent data such as annual reports, planning studies etc. Contacts made during this course of the work are listed in Appendix E.

Phase two was completed by July 15, the date of the official end of the contract. The research team offices in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse were closed at this time.

Phase Three:

A final meeting was held in Vancouver at the end of July to continue analysis of the data and to review all matters concerning the preparation and writing of the final report.

The report, completed by Women's Research Centre Committee members at the end of November 1979, was reviewed by Fort Nelson and Whitehorse research team members prior to its presentation to the Northern Pipeline Agency.

Project team members occasionally found themselves having to defend the project's integrity simply because the focus was women. This is not uncommon in the area of research on women's concerns, and is mentioned here for the benefit of those initiating other such projects as a matter to be taken into account in the planning process. It is not that the style or intent of the work should change, but rather that participants in such a project should be clear as to the differences in critiques based on discriminatory attitudes and critiques based on constructive questioning. Without this clarity, the principles of the work at hand can be unnecessarily undermined.

1.6 NEED FOR FURTHER WORK

During the course of this research project different groups in Fort Nelson, Whitehorse and other communities expressed interest in undertaking local research on development issues, specifically in regard to the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline. Such work should be encouraged. A valuable component of this project was the community base of each of our Fort Nelson and Whitehorse research team members. Inestimable depth was given to the project because of their knowledge of the community, and because the intiative for the work had come from their community groups. Funding for the development of such local community research expertise should come from government and industry, who serve to benefit from incorporating locally based research into their planning.

In this report all women are presented as they described themselves to us. Indian women have not been distinguished from non-Indian women in the discussion of issues or concerns unless they spoke to an issue as a separate or Indian women's issue. If a study was to be designed to consider more specific needs and concerns of Indian women, that study should be designed and undertaken by the appropriate Indian women's organizations.

There is also a need for more research to be undertaken on the lives of women and their families, especially in communities or regions where changes and development are being considered. This research should be designed to provide an account of the world as perceived by women, and include women's descriptions of their work, lives and experience. In this way, women's needs become visible and their integral role in the family and community can be understood to be socially relevant work.

2.0 WOMEN IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

Women's perspective and comments about the community in which they live are detailed in this chapter. The Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women interviewed by the researchers explained why they live in the north, and spoke of the positive and negative aspects of northern living. This allows the identification of the factors that influence women's lives. The community services available in each town - including social, education and medical services - are examined.

As a preface to the women's comments about their communities, brief descriptions of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are included below.

2.1 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS

A. Fort Nelson:

The community of Fort Nelson in northeast British Columbia stretches along the Alaska Highway. The actual townsite of Fort Nelson is commonly referred to as 'Mile 300' (of the Alaska Highway). In addition, there is further development from mile 293 to mile 312, and scattered farms from mile 278 to mile 320.

The population of Fort Nelson is 2,916 persons according to the 1976 census. However, the population has since increased and is estimated by the village planner, aldermen and other officials as approximately 4,500 to 5,000 persons in 1979.

Each winter, after freeze-up ensures that vehicles can travel into the bush area around Fort Nelson, the population of the area expands by approximately 3,000 to 4,000 persons. These individuals, usually housed in bunkhouses at the worksite, are involved in logging and resource exploration. Some bring their families who then live in Fort Nelson, and many workers travel to Fort Nelson in their time off for entertainment and shopping.

The economy of the area is traditionally based on hunting, trapping and fur-trading. The community of Fort Nelson originated from an Indian settlement on the banks of the Fort Nelson River. In 1942 Fort Nelson was a construction base for the building of the Alaska Highway, and also served as a staging base for the United States air force.

Fort Nelson was incorporated as a village in 1971: it is presently governed by a mayor and four aldermen. The Village of Fort Nelson is part of the Peace River - Liard Regional District, and is considered the northern economic and resource base of the Peace-Liard Region.

Today the economy of Fort Nelson is based on the extraction of natural resources, and the administrative and support services of those industries. Major resource development includes oil and gas exploration, logging, and processing of wood byproducts. There is a large gas processing plant located near Fort Nelson, owned and operated by Westcoast Transmission. Transportation industries and tourism are other aspects of the area's economic base.

Climate

Winters in Fort Nelson are dominated by dry, cold arctic air; the summer brings cool moist air that produces about half of the yearly precipitation. The periods between summer and winter are short as the slow melting of snow and ice in the spring delays the warming effect of the returning sun. In the fall, the rapidly lengthening nights quickly return temperatures to freezing.

The mean total precipitation is 446.4 millimetres: mean snowfall is 191.5 cm per year and mean rainfall is 273.8 mm per year. There is an average of 130 days of precipitation per year. The average mean temperature in July is 23 degrees Centigrade. In January the average mean temperature is -23.2 degrees Centigrade. An extreme of -51.7 degrees C. has been recorded in winter. There are approximately 219 days of frost each year.

Business and Services

Fort Nelson has two grocery stores, two convenience stores, two department stores, two hardware stores, one building supply centre, one pharmacy, two banks, and numerous owner-operated shops such as a florist and hairdresser. The town has eight restaurants two bars, nine motel/hotels, a laundromat and several service stations. There are also two insurance agencies, two real estate companies and one lawyer.

There is a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Detachment in Fort Nelson: the staff includes 13 officers and several full and part time support staff. The RCMP is responsible for covering the region from mile 161 to mile 546 of the Alaska Highway.

A public library in Fort Nelson is open part time. The community has one day care centre and a play school. There are the usual federal and provincial government services and offices, some represented by a government agent. Offices and services include a court clerk, public health department, ministry of human resources office, liquor outlet and so forth.

Fort Nelson has six churches and many service organizations and groups including the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Beta Sigma Phi, Elks, United Church Women, Historical Society and Lions Club.

There is also a women's centre in Fort Nelson. This is a voluntary organization which was set up in November 1977 with funding from Canada Works. In February 1978 the Centre opened a thrift shop which brings in sufficient funds to pay the Centre's rent. The Fort Nelson Women's Centre collects and shares community information on housing, childcare, baby-sitting and legal rights. The Centre sponsors workshops on the problems of battered women; provides information and referral assistance to women in crisis; and undertakes public education on the need for a transition house for women and their children. Its members participate in the Northern Lights College women's advisory group. In addition, the Centre's brief to a provincial cabinet meeting in October 1978 resulted in the allocation of five units in a new apartment complex as low income housing.

Transportation and Communications

Canadian Pacific Airlines offers daily flights to Edmonton, Vancouver, Grande Prairie, Fort St. John, Watson Lake and Whitehorse from Fort Nelson. Simpson Air has four weekly flights to Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson in the Northwest Territories. Other air carriers flying out of Fort Nelson include Okanagan Helicopters, Highland Helicopters, Glen Air Services and Arctic Air. The Fort Nelson Airport is operated by the federal Ministry of Transport 24 hours per day. There is no airport control tower in Fort Nelson.

The Alaska Highway is the only road link with points in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. There is a highway under construction that, when complete, will link Fort Nelson with Fort Simpson in the Northwest Territories. This road is commonly referred to as the 'Liard Road' by Fort Nelson residents.

Bus service north and south on the Alaska Highway is offered by Coachways. B.C Rail's northern terminus is Fort

Nelson, and the southbound route commences from there. When the rivers are not ice-bound, river barges operate out of Fort Nelson to the Northwest Territories, and, eventually, the Arctic Ocean.

There are two taxi services and several car rental agencies operating in Fort Nelson. There is a school bus service but no regular local public transit.

The local newspaper, the Fort Nelson News, is published weekly and there is one local radio station on the air for some hours each day. CBC radio is also available. Cablevision was made available to the community in summer 1979, bringing three more television channels to the town. CBC Television North is available via satellite. NorthWesTel offers telephone services and CN Telecommunications offers telegraph and cable services. Postal service consists of box pick-up and general delivery.

Education

There are two elementary schools and one secondary school in Fort Nelson. The middle school (grades seven and eight) was destroyed by fire in March 1979. Middle school students are presently housed in portable classrooms located on the secondary school grounds. Northern Lights Community College, operating out of a store-front office, utilizes whatever classroom space it can locate in the community to offer short term vocational courses, basic education upgrading, several university courses, and a variety of other credit and non-credit courses to part time students.

Medical Services

The 41-bed Fort Nelson General Hospital has a staff of 25 nurses: the four doctors who service the hospital also work full time in the town's one medical clinic. Visits by specialists, and emergency medical flights to Vancouver General Hospital are arranged as needed. A travelling children's clinic comes to Fort Nelson twice a year and brings the services of four specialists. Dental service is provided by a dentist of the group of dentists from Kelowna, B.C. who own the practice in Fort Nelson and service it on a rotating basis. There is a public health inspector and public health nurse based in Fort Nelson.

Although Fort Nelson lies within the jurisdiction of the Fort St. John-Dawson Creek Mental Health Services Branch, there are no specific mental health services offered in Fort Nelson.

Recreation

Local recreation facilities include an ice arena with a five sheet curling rink: an auditorium, meeting rooms and concession stand; two tennis courts; an indoor swimming pool open nine months of the year; a sauna; and several baseball diamonds. Popular activities include cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, skating, snowshoeing, baseball, soccer, hockey, broomball, curling. There is one movie theatre in Fort Nelson, and a golf course is being developed.

Housing

Federal government housing is available at the airport for government personnel. The town is laid out at the base of a hill - generally known as 'the hill'. Housing is available in the town core, in the East Subdivision, Gairdner Subdivision and Cottonwood Subdivision, all located at the base of the hill. These homes are usually smaller and less expensive than the homes available on the hill or in the new Mountainview Subdivision located in a newly cleared section of the hill. New subdivisions are being developed. There are five trailer parks and three recreational vehicle/camping parks in Fort Nelson.

B. Whitehorse:

Whitehorse is situated on the banks of the Yukon River 50 miles north of the 60th parallel. With a population of 16,000 Whitehorse is the largest settlement in the Yukon Territory: over one-half of the Yukon's inhabitants live within its 162-square miles.

The city began and has developed as a distribution centre for the Yukon. Whitehorse has been the railhead for the White Pass and Yukon Route since the railway's completion in 1900. Sternwheelers carried passengers and freight from Whitehorse up the Yukon River to various communities within the Yukon and the city was an important stop-over spot during the Klondike Gold Rush days at the turn of the century.

Until 1942 only a few hundred people lived in Whitehorse: then the construction of the Alaska Highway by the United States Army personnel increased the population by thousands. The Alaska Highway was the strategic road link between Alaska and the rest of the United States. In addition, an airfield was built at Whitehorse as part of the Northwest Staging Route, and the city was an active army camp for several years. This boom ceased at the end of World War II, but Whitehorse remained an important communications centre.

In the 1950s the emphasis shifted to highway systems within the Yukon, and the Alaska Highway became the transportation link in northern British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska.

Whitehorse was incorporated as a city in 1950, and became capital of the Yukon Territory in 1953. The city is governed by a mayor and six aldermen. In 1979, mining, tourism and government, in addition to transport and communications, formed the basis of Whitehorse's economy.

Climate

Whitehorse has a dry climate with four seasons of variable length. The winters are cold with near total darkness through most of December. The summers are warm with near total daylight through most of June. The average annual precipitation is 260.3 millimetres, with 127.8 cm snowfall and 142 mm rainfall. There is an average of 118 days of precipitation per year. The average mean temperature in July is 14.1 degrees Centigrade: in January the average mean temperature is -18.9 degrees Centigrade. Extremes of -50 degrees Centigrade have been recorded in the winter.

Business and services

Because of its size, Whitehorse offers the amenities of a city, but because of its location there are restrictions on the quantity and quality of services available. There is one indoor shopping mall with eight stores, a bank and a food store. Whitehorse also offers three department stores, five banks and one credit union, five food stores and many smaller shops and stores. There are several corner grocery stores located throughout the city. Whitehorse has seven hotels and twelve motels, four restaurants, 16 licensed dining rooms, two taverns and 18 cocktail lounges. There are 10 real estate companies, nine insurance agencies and six legal firms operating in Whitehorse.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police operate a sub-division and town detachment in Whitehorse. There are two private security services available.

The public library in Whitehorse is located downtown, and there is a branch library in the suburb of Takhini, supplemented by the Yukon Archives and a film library. There are seven daycare centres in Whitehorse and 12 churches. Among the numerous service organizations are the Rotary, Kiwanis, Yukon Status of Women Council, Elks, and Business and Professional Women's Club.

In addition, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre in Whitehorse was organized in 1974 to redress the lack of community resources for women. The Centre receives some funding from the federal department of the Secretary of State, although it largely relies on volunteer workers. The Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre offers crisis counselling, emotional support, information on housing, employment, childcare, rape, and legal and medical services. It refers women to social service agencies and resource people, and receives referrals from those agencies. The centre also has a library and has offered programs in crafts, recreation, nutrition, family planning and crisis counselling.

Government

The Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) is based in Whitehorse. The Commissioner of the Yukon (who is appointed by the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) and the Executive Committee, made up of five of the 24 elected members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, are responsible for the administration of the Yukon Territory in accordance with the Yukon Act. There are also 23 federal government departments or agencies represented in Whitehorse, including the Northern Pipeline Agency, Department of Justice, Labour Canada, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Department of Regional Economic Expansion, and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Transportation and Communications

Canadian Pacific Airlines offers daily flights south to Watson Lake, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Vancouver, Edmonton and Grand Prairie. Transair offers three flights a week east and south to points in western Canada; Wien Air offers daily flights to Alaska. Locally based airlines offer regular and charter flights to points within the Yukon.

The Alaska Highway runs through Whitehorse and connects the Canadian provinces and Alaska. Local highways connect Whitehorse with other Yukon towns. The Skagway road connects Whitehorse with the Alaskan port of Skagway on the Pacific coast as does the White Pass and Yukon Railway. There is a bus service north and south on the Alaska Highway.

Local transportation is provided by four taxi companies, four car rental agencies and the Whitehorse Transit Society. The Whitehorse Transit Society operates five mini-buses over a total of 750 miles of fixed routes between the subdivisions and downtown Whitehorse. There is a school bus service for students.

The newspaper 'The Whitehorse Star' is published daily; there are also weekly editions of the 'Yukon News' and 'Yukon Indian News'. The 'Northern Times' newspaper, which had been published in Whitehorse, ceased publication in summer 1979. There are two local radio stations in addition to CBC Radio, one local television station, CBC Television North and six other television channels available through cablevision. NorthWesTel offers telephone, telegraph and telex services. Postal service includes home delivery or box pickup.

Education

There are five elementary schools and three high schools in Whitehorse. The Vocational and Technical Training Centre offers full time, part time and evening programs for adults. A limited university education program is available through the Department of Education for night and correspondence courses. A teacher training program is available to Yukon residents through the University of Alberta.

Medical Services

The Medical Services Branch (Yukon Region) of the federal Department of Health and Welfare Canada, operates health facilities and programs to meet the needs of Yukon residents. The Yukon Territorial Government shares capital and operating costs with the Medical Services Branch. Medical services available to Yukon residents include environmental health, public health nursing, health education, mental health, public service health, dental health, visiting medical specialists and infectious and chronic disease control. The Whitehorse General Hospital has 120 beds and a staff of 20 doctors and 60 nurses. Various medical specialists are brought to the hospital where they hold clinics. There was a total of 25 visits by seven specialists in 1978.

There are three medical clinics in Whitehorse, two dental clinics and an optometrist service. At present there are 22 doctors and two medical specialists resident.

Mental Health services for the Yukon are provided by a regional psychologist, regional psychiatrist and a community mental health nurse: all are based in Whitehorse. The Alcohol and Drug Services Branch operates within the Department of Health of the YTG. The Department of Health is responsible for health care insurance. Basic dental care is provided free to pre-schoolers and children through to grade eight by the Medical Services Branch (Yukon Region).

Recreation

Local recreation facilities include a covered swimming pool open six to seven months of the year, a nearby natural hot springs, two curling clubs, 15 tennis courts, several baseball fields and two enclosed hockey arenas. A recreation centre near the airport has gymnasium facilities, and the Takhini recreation centre has four sheets of ice, a bowling alley and pool tables. There are several outdoor skating areas, a golf course and a movie theatre in Whitehorse. The Yukon Arts Council is based in Whitehorse and provides an impetus for cultural activities in the Yukon, and there is also an active drama club.

Housing

The city is divided into several areas and is spread out over a wide area. The downtown core provides a commercial centre as well as residential housing. Subdivisions include Riverdale, Marwell, Valleyview, Hillcrest, Crest View, Porter Creek, McPherson, Takhini and Wolf Creek. Takhini is the major area for government housing, although housing for government employees is scattered throughout the rest of the city as well. There are seven large trailer courts in Whitehorse.

2.2 WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR COMMUNITY

The development of northern communities in Canada has been based on the extraction of natural resources, these resources being required for industry in southern Canada and the United States. As noted in the study 'Northern Transitions', resource extraction as commonly practiced in northern Canada "results in boom-and-bust development, the inevitable consequences of which have been degradation of the land and disruption of social communities." (Peterson, p. 253). There is a need to progress from the 'Northern Vision' attitude of the 1950's which assumed that economic growth was unquestionably good and that large scale resource extraction in the north is desirable.

The development and growth of a community affects all its inhabitants. The great speed and extent of development which occurs with the boom and bust development particular to projects such as pipelines has a great impact on small scale, northern communities. Women living in communities such as Whitehorse and Fort Nelson are very much affected by such development. However, their needs and the impact of change upon women too often goes unrecognized and undocumented. The women interviewed for this report in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse had definite views on northern development. One Whitehorse informant succinctly expressed the opinions of many of the women interviewed:

> "Development is inevitable. If well planned and undertaken, development can be a positive influence. If not integrated, and done for political reasons and too hastily, it could have a disruptive influence."

Throughout the interviews, Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women stressed that community stability is a priority for them. The construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline represents an immediate challenge to learn from the mistakes of the past. It is an opportunity to prove that degredation of the land and disruption of social communities need not be inevitable consequences of development. A move towards the creation of more stable northern communities is needed, and the specific concerns of women living in the north must be taken into account in the growth and development of these communities.

This section relates how Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women regard their communities. The reasons women gave for living in the north are detailed and examined. Employment emerged as the main reason why people lived in the north. Most of the married women interviewed said they lived in Fort Nelson or Whitehorse because of their husbands' jobs. The majority of single women resident in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse were there because of their own jobs. Those women who reported living in the north for reasons of employment often planned to be only temporary residents: this contributed to the problem of community instability of which many women spoke.

Although employment was the main rationale for northern residence, women and their families lived in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse for a variety of reasons. Some moved to the north out of desire to explore and a sense of adventure. Others were born and raised in the communities. Regardless of their reasons for living in the north, most informants spoke favourably of their communities. They praised the friendliness of the people, the small town atmosphere and the potential for community involvement.

Among the negative aspects of life in northern communities, the harsh climate and isolation were most frequently mentioned by our informants. These factors were of particular concern to women such as mothers with young children who don't - and often can't - work outside the home because of the lack of adequate childcare. New residents with no immediate family and few friends also stressed their difficulty in coping with the climate and the isolation of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Informants reported that the stress brought on by the long, cold, dark winters and the sense of isolation often resulted in severe problems including depression, loneliness, alcoholism, 'cabin fever'and suicide.

Why women live in the north

Informants identified various reasons for living in the north, ranging from the economic - either because of their own or their partner's work - to the aesthetic, that is, an appreciation of the beauty of the northern landscape and wilderness. Included among the informants are women who were born or raised in the north; women who came north with their husbands, or to join family or friends; women who came to work; women who felt the need for a change or wanted to start a new life; and women who came for the adventure. Motives for living in the north include "economic, social and psychological reasons all intertwined." (Nickels, Kehoe, p. 18).

By far the most common reason married women identified for moving to the north was their husband's had or were seeking work in the north. A job transfer, common among federal government employees living in Whitehorse, or the search for work in a resource-based industry was what brought many of the informants' husbands to Whitehorse and Fort Nelson. In the study 'Women in Northern Communities', Ann McQuaid states: "It appears that most of the women arrived in this area (Smithers-Telkwa) accompanying their husbands, many of whom came to work in the forest industry." (McQuaid, p. 5). The 'Northern B.C. Women's Task Force Report on Single Industry Resource Communities' found that "...a woman comes to Kitimat because her husband has found or hopes to find work." ('Northern ..., p. 25)

However, single women most often said they came to the north for their own work. "I came here as a challenge, an adventure and particularly to work" said one Whitehorse informant. She also cited the romantic challenge and the freedom she perceived in the emotional, political and social environment as additional factors which induced her to move north.

Women who go north for employment - their own or their partner's - often plan on only a temporary stay, usually between two and five years. Women who believe they will only be in the town temporarily sometimes hesitate to become involved in community life, and feel little or no committment to the town in which they live. Many of these short term residents have young families and therefore often do not have the time for community involvement.

However, there are many women who planned to stay for only a short time but have become committed to life in the north. "I didn't want to move to the Yukon and only agreed to come for a nine-month period" said one Whitehorse informant. Yet even after separating from her husband she remained because "I have many friends and a life for myself now." Another Whitehorse woman, who initially had reservations about moving north, commented: "It was better than I expected. In fact, I've become very attached to the north ... I don't suppose we'll be thinking of leaving for another five years anyway."

A few informants said they moved north for "the sense of adventure" or "to test myself." One Whitehorse woman explained: "It's like living out a dream. People test their limits up here, for example a cabin in the bush or woods. In the Yukon you can 'meet your ambitions' regardless of your qualifications, expertise and experience." Another informant said she liked living in the north because of the sense of freedom and challenge, saying "I will likely be here forever."

The need for a fresh start in life or new opportunities brought some women north. One informant who came north with her husband said "we were both keen on coming - we had to make it or break it on our own." Another informant said "I felt I could redefine my existence in the Yukon."

Other women came north because of their children. An informant stated she and her husband had researched the north and chosen Whitehorse because of the schools and recreational opportunities available: "We didn't want to raise a family in the city, so we decided to come north."

Escape from the urban development of large Canadian cities was the reason for the move north of some informants. They came to enjoy the outdoors and wilderness: "I came north for peace and quiet and to escape terminal development scenarios in Ontario."

2.2.1 Positive Aspects of Life in Northern Communities

Many factors influenced how women regarded their communities. These include why a woman lives in the north, her type of work, length of stay in the community, location in the community, and family make-up. Most informants spoke favourably of life in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, although they also commented at length on the many problems they face and the lack of services in their community. Fort Nelson women said:

> "I have lived in Fort Nelson all my life and I'll never leave. It's a good place to live."
>
> "There's so much potential I hope to live here and raise my two children here."
>
> "I love living here. I find the community and people friendly."
>
> "I like Fort Nelson. It has a lot of downfalls but I would rather live here than in some city."

Whitehorse women made the following comments:

> "I really like Whitehorse. I imagine we'll be here for a good many years."
>
> "It has a sense of community which is 'more than a city' - lets you have a sense of individuality."
>
> "It's a stimulating place, lots of creativity, lots of potential, unique people."
>
> "I wouldn't leave Whitehorse for the world. I've lived here too long - living in the city would be impossible for me. I have lots of friends and I love this place."

Some informants spoke of several things they appreciated in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. The friendliness of residents of the towns was mentioned frequently by both relative newcomers, who were impressed by the way people in these communities helped and supported each other, as well as long term residents. Informants also said they enjoyed the small town atmosphere and more relaxed way of life in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

Many informants said their communities offered a "good atmosphere for raising children." This was a very positive aspect of life in the north for them. Their children were a common interest for many of the women interviewed: one informant noted that "people meet people through or about their kids." Through their children and related activities and concerns, a sense of belonging in the community was created. "The presence of small children is the most important catalyst in neighbourhood formation," affirms the community planning study done by Thompson, Berwick and Pratt of the new town of Tumbler Ridge in northeast B.C. (Thompson et al, 'Physical Plan', p. 250)

There was a variety of organizations available in which to become involved felt many informants, and a good cross-section of interests were covered. "There is more opportunity to be involved here than in cities down south" said one Whitehorse woman. According to another informant, "the north does indeed have opportunity. Lots of people come up here and make their own opportunity with a small business, a career or a club."

As mentioned previously, the potential for wilderness and recreational activities was of importance to Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants. This encouraged some women to move north.

2.2.2 Negative Aspects of Life in Northern Communities

As well as positive factors of life in the north, informants identifed many problems in living in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Although the problems they identified are not unique to northern communities, they are exacerbated by the geographical situation. The extreme climate, sense of isolation and transiency of the communities are manifested in mental stress experienced by many northern women. These factors are specifically implicated as causes of depression, loneliness, alcoholism, suicide, marriage breakdown and the syndrome commonly known as cabin fever.

Many informants found the climate a major problem and dominant factor in their lives. For some women it influenced the length of time they envisaged living in Fort Nelson or Whitehorse. Comments such as "It's cold, isolating. I can't imagine being here permanently" and "I couldn't stand another winter ... the darkness and drabness gets to you" were typical of the comments of many informants.

The long winters are particularly hard on women at home with young children. These women experience significant increases in loneliness, depression, and cabin fever in the winter. Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse Sharon Roe said in an interview with researchers:

> "Cabin fever is a real phenomenon, especially in the winter and in women with young kids ... The practicality of getting kids outside is more difficult than staying home and being bored."

The extreme cold in the winter makes it impossible for children to play outdoors, yet homes in the north are not designed with sufficient indoor play areas for children: this is discussed in the following chapter 'The Physical Environment - Community Planning and Housing'. According to an article on mental health in the Yukon:

> "..the factor of prime importance is forced confinement in cramped quarters. From our experience such conditions often prevail in the north in the winter. This is particularly true to the housewife with small children. The intense cold may preclude visits out of the house for prolonged spells. A further aspect not to be overlooked is the

> long periods of darkness in the north during the winter which further reduces outside stimuli."
>
> (Abbott, Kehoe, p. 7)

Some women found that if they could manage to keep busy and involved in the community it helped relieve the problems associated with the climate. "Now that I'm involved with people weather is unimportant" said one Whitehorse woman. "The long endless winters are awful. As long as you keep busy it's not too bad" commented another. It is the responsibility of the town to provide opportunities for involvement through such channels as church groups, service clubs, social clubs and recreational opportunities. According to Abbott and Kehoe in the study 'Mental Health Practice in the Yukon':

> "The whole community has a part to play in the prevention of cabin fever. Any community effort made to welcome and integrate the newcomers would go far in prevention."
>
> (Abbott, Kehoe, p. 7)

Even when activities are available, the winter weather often makes access to activities difficult especially for women without their own vehicles. One Whitehorse woman related that "the climate in the Yukon is definitely a factor in winter activities. Even the things I was involved in I often missed because of the cold weather." Hospital Administrator Bob Tarney commented on the stresses of Fort Nelson life and the transportation problem:

> "Cabin fever is bad here especially for women: there are lots of activities but transportation is a problem for getting to and from the activities."
>
> (Interview with Mr. Tarney,
> Hospital Administrator, Fort
> Nelson General Hospital,
> July 1979)

Furthermore, transportation out-of-town is an even greater problem than usual in the winter. The difficulty in getting away intensifies the feeling of depression and isolation. "The long, cold, dark winters - I hate them. This place is too isolated, too far away from other cities and it's too expensive to go anywhere" said one Whitehorse informant.

Stress and associated emotional problems are increased by the winter. Informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse spoke a good deal of this:

> "The winters are cold and dark. I get depressed, and I notice the isolation then."
>
> "I was deeply affected by the cold and darkness in February. I see this as the most negative aspect of the Yukon."
>
> "I feel caged, penned, trapped and the cold intensifies these feelings. It's like you're the only people alive."

Several studies have recorded the increase in anxiety and depression among northern residents when the cold and darkness constrain them to remain indoors for long periods. This is detailed by Siemens in 'Single Enterprise Community Studies in Northern Canada' and by Kehoe and Abbott in 'Suicide and Attempted Suicide in the Yukon Territory' who state:

> "The environment itself cannot be ignored as a significant factor in suicidal behaviour. The extremely cold winter coupled with the short days puts a stress on everyone."
>
> (Kehoe, Abbott, p. 16)

Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants explained they experienced both physical and psychological isolation. "You know how isolated you are when the road washes out and there is no food coming up the highway" said one woman. Factors women most frequently mentioned as contributing to isolation were inadequate transportation, lack of family and friends, and the high degree of transiency of the population in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

The cost of transportation was of great concern to many informants. One Whitehorse woman said: "If transportation out was cheaper I'd arrange family visits to make life bearable." Her husband gets frequent business trips south but housewives "the ones that need them, don't." Another woman said "I would visit family and friends in Yellowknife and the south more often if the service was cheaper and more reliable."

Separation from family members was seen by many informants as one of the factors that produced the greatest sense of isolation. Relative newcomers to Whitehorse and Fort Nelson felt this particularly acutely: "I feel a sense of isolation in Whitehorse especially when I think of where my family is." Another woman reported that "a consideration of whether I stay in the Yukon is that my family is in Manitoba, and my parents would like to be closer to their grandchild."

The feeling of being isolated meant extra emphasis was placed on friendships, according to informants. Friendships provided a substitute support system. "It takes about two years to adjust to the isolation. You rely on your friends - therefore you build up strong relationships" said one woman. And "people tend to depend more on each other up here - I guess because we're so far from families and also because of the isolation."

Due to the strong emphasis placed on friendships, transiency was of primary importance to many of the women interviewed. Both Whitehorse and Fort Nelson have highly transient populations: many people live in the towns only for the duration of short term employment obligations.

Some women reported they were hesitant about trying to start new friendships:

> "People tend to be leery of investing time and emotions in getting to know people then having them leave."
>
> "One house on the block has changed hands four times in five years. This losing friends is a big emotional upheaval for all concerned, and some of my friends say they don't want to take on new friendships knowing they will have to say goodbye soon."

Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse Sharon Roe spoke of the lack of extended family, and said it resulted in loneliness and led to marital and family problems. (Interview with Sharon Roe, Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse, June 1979).

Cabin fever, which has also been called 'housewife psychosis', is a syndrome which results from long-term, enforced living under cramped, crowded conditions. It is particularly prevalent among housewives during the long, northern winter. Its symptoms are described:

> "It (cabin fever) is characterized by depression, irritability, easily provoked anger and a breakdown of relationships with those persons with whom the sufferer is living. The syndrome is much more common in women than in men.
>
> (Abbott, Kehoe, p. 8)

A hypothetical person most prone to the syndrome is described in the study by Abbott and Kehoe, 'Mental Health Practice in the Yukon'. This composite is a housewife, with several young children, who is new to the area, has no family or close friends nearby, and whose husband is away a great deal. One Fort Nelson woman who had suffered from cabin fever described her experience:

> "There are different degrees of depression. It is intensified by the weather, by lack of transportation, by having no adults to communicate with and being isolated in the home with little kids all day. You tend to spend a lot of time in bars. You suffer from lethargy and acutal physical sickness. It leads

> to greater introspection, a turning in on oneself - to the point where you look for excuses to stay home. Often you end up resenting your husband."

The incidence of cabin fever in isolated northern communities is exceptionally high and has been documented in other studies. As a result of cabin fever there is substantial use of anti-depressant drugs - particularly by women. According to Siemens in 'Single Enterprise Community Studies in Northern Canada', a doctor estimated that 70 per cent of his women patients showed symptoms of depression. The doctor prescribed anti-depressant drugs for such women, and recommended they become more involved in the community. (Siemens, p. 24) In addition, the author notes there is an extremely high incidence of psycho-active drug use - particularly by women- in the late winter, the peak month being March. (Siemens, p. 25)

Another problem which concerned most informants was the excessive use of alcohol in their communities. Alcohol abuse has been identified in many studies as a particular problem in northern communities (see Siemens, 1973; Spearman, 1975). In part alcohol abuse results from the stresses induced by the northern climate, and the towns of Whitehorse and Fort Nelson are no exception: many women commented that alcohol is a major problem in their towns. However, women reported drinking is also an accepted part of life. Drinking is one of the major forms of recreation in both Whitehorse and Fort Nelson:

> "Alcohol runs this place (Fort Nelson). Bars and lounges are the only places to go."

> "Whitehorse is definitely a drinking town - there are 29 bars. Everything seems to involve drinking - if I didn't drink I might as well stay home."

> "Much socializing is done in bars, and this is the main source of recreation for many adults in Whitehorse."

The use of alcohol as a form of recreation was confirmed by Sergeant Blair of the Fort Nelson RCMP. When asked if alcohol was a problem in Fort Nelson he replied, "Alcohol is a big problem. There is nothing else to do." (Interview with Sergeant Blair, Fort Nelson RCMP, June 1979)

Whitehorse enjoys the questionable distinction of having "the greatest per capita consumption of alcohol of any town in Canada. (Abbott, Kehoe, p. 9) More than three quarters of all Yukon adults drink, and one in fifteen drinkers is an alcoholic. ('Proceedings of the Fifth Northern Resources Conference',p. 84) In an editorial on alcohol use in the Northern Times it was noted that the Yukon Territorial Government, as the distributor of alcoholic beverages, will make over $40 million in liquor profits in 1979. According to the editorial, the government stocks "cheap, bad wine" to appeal to the most obvious alcoholics and "manages to subsidize liquor sales so that prices remain constant" while other more essential goods such as food staples go without subsidy. (Northern Times, March 26, 1979)

Informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse felt facilities and services to deal with alcohol abuse are inadequate. In Fort Nelson women emphasized the need for an alcohol treatment centre:

> "Alcohol is a big problem here. I hope the detox centre is going to be real."
>
> "Alcohol is a major problem here with the hospital being used for people drying out."
>
> "We need an alcoholic centre, the hospital is not the place for drunks."

Professionals working in the area agreed with our informants: when asked what services were available to deal with alcohol abuse in Fort Nelson one doctor replied: "None. We handle it the best we can. Alcohol is a big problem here. Jobs are demanding and people drink for relaxation." (Interview with Dr. Kenyon, Fort Nelson, July 1979) This doctor also confirmed that the hospital is being used as a detoxification centre.

Despite the apparent need for an alcohol abuse treatment centre in Fort Nelson, little progress appears to be happening in the creation of such a facility. In June 1979 a joint proposal was put forward to the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Health from the inter-ministerial committee on the Peace River - Liard region. It proposed that the two ministries should work together to determine the "feasibility of operating shared services" which are "economically difficult for any single service agency to provide" due to the small size of the communities in the Peace River-Liard region. In this scheme the Alcohol and Drug Commission would fund one out-patient counsellor and the hospital would still be used as a detox centre, with the hospital staff being trained to deal with addicted patients. The proposal for this project represents only a preliminary and tentative step towards an effective mechanism to deal with alcohol abuse in Fort Nelson.

In comparison with FortNelson, Whitehorse appears, on the surface, to offer more services for alcoholics. The Alcohol and Drug Services Branch of the Yukon Territorial Government has set up prevention programs including campaigns for education and early intervention. There is also a detoxification centre which can accommodate 13 people and professional counselling services. A private agency called Crossroads offers a 30 day residential program for alcohol abusers. The Yukon Counselling Association for Native Alcohol and Drug Addiction is working at the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse through educational and counselling programs.

However, in spite of these programs many Whitehorse people felt that more should and could be done in terms of preventing and lessening alcohol abuse. The head of Alcohol and Drug Services, Bill Cline, stated that more alternatives are vital,particularly programs for specific groups such as women and senior citizens. He believes "women hide their drunkeness more ... women in the middle class are more difficult to get into treatment until a major crisis hits. They tend to go outside more for treatment." Mr. Cline also mentioned that more than just counselling was necessary - involvement in the community was important. (Interview with Bill Cline, Alcohol and Drug Service, Whitehorse, June 1979)

The lack of treatment for alcoholics in Whitehorse was commented upon in the Whitehorse Star: "Ninety per cent of the inmates at the Correctional Centre are alcoholics, and virtually none of the staff are trained to deal with their illness." (Whitehorse Star, June 7, 1979) Mayor Don Branigan, Whitehorse, is in favour of a long term alcohol treatment centre according to the Northern Times of March 12, 1979. However, an attempt to enlist the support of City Council for such a centre failed. (Northern Times, May 15, 1979) Alchol abuse and treatment were summed up by one informant in Whitehorse as "hopeless".

The impact of alcohol abuse on the communities of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse is devastating. It is essential that treatment facilities be made available to deal with the problem.

Alcohol abuse, cabin fever and other stresses prevalent in northern communities have been implicated in the rate of suicide or attempted suicide. Suicide is a problem that concerns women in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Fort Nelson women, in a presentation to the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Northern Pipeline

Bill, noted that February is referred to as "suicide month" by the residents, and three "successful suicides" were reported in February 1978.

Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse Sharon Roe said she believed statistics on suicide are often inaccurate, because some suicides go unreported by people who wish to avoid the stigma of a suicide in their family. Only two suicides were recorded for the Yukon in 1978, and Ms. Roe said this represented an artificially low number. (Interview with Sharon Roe, Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse, June 1979)

In a report on 'Suicide and Attempted Suicide in the Yukon Territory', it was reported that more women attempted suicide than men. The report suggested the higher incidence of suicide attempts among women may be a

> "..consequence of the lifestyle in the Yukon Territory which has often been described as a 'frontier culture' and 'a man's world' in which there is a large amount of marital discord. There may be a tendendcy for certain personality types to drift into the north in search of quick money, adventure, anonymity or other dubious goals which become unrealized. The wife of such a person may be the first overt casualty in this immature or unrealistic adventure. "
>
> (Kehoe, Abbott, p.22)

Suicide is, of course, an extreme result of the depression and loneliness that are the manifestations of the negative aspects of living in northern communities. It is important to note that most women perceive advantages in their towns, in spite of the problems they described. They appreciate the beauty of their physical environment and the opportunities for employment available to their partners or themselves. Many informants said their community was friendly, had a good atmosphere for raising children, and was preferable to southern cities. The women's ability to maximize these positive aspects depends, in large measure, on the effectiveness of basic community services to meet their needs and reduce the problems created by isolation and climate. These basic services are examined in the following section of this chapter.

2.3 BASIC COMMUNITY SERVICES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN

From the comments of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women on their communities, reported in the preceeding section of this chapter, it is clear that both problems and opportunities are present for women living in northern communities. Although our informants found particular advantages in living in the north, they also spoke of aspects of northern life that have a negative impact upon their lives, particularly the climate and isolation.

This section describes the community services available to women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, including health services, adult education, cultural and recreation services,police and transportation services. The capacity of these services to meet women's basic service needs and to help women deal with the problems resulting from the northern climate and isolation is examined.

In the interviewsin Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, women's comments on services frequently reflected their concern for their children, partner, or the quality of life in their community. However, informants also talked at length of the services they - as distinct individuals - needed. There is a common tendency in existing community research, and in society at large, to overlook the fact that women have distinct and special needs. Women's needs often are considered only in relation to the needs of others, and so become invisible.

The United Nations 'International Covenants on Human Rights' affirm: "Everycne has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; to education; to take part in cultural life; and to freedom from fear." Everyone includes women. Therefore, in this chapter, the focus is informants' assessment of the adequacy of basic community services for women themselves.

From our informants' comments it is clear that services are inadequate. Women's physical and mental health care needs are not adequately met in either community. Counselling and support services are badly needed. Educational programs are inadequate. Recreational and cultural facilities and programs need improvement. Women do not feel physically safe, partly because the police protection agencies have not recognized or not yet addressed crimes of violence against women. Expensive transportation services to 'the outside' exacerbate the isolation of the communities. Within the community, access to basic services by public transport is restricted or non-existent.

2.3.1 Health Services

Informants' comments about the physical and mental health services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are recorded in this chapter. In reporting their comments and examining the implications, the following points should be kept in mind: Firstly, health is not the state of not being ill; rather, it is, as the World Health Organization defines "the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (Riffel, p. 42) Secondly, any assessment of health services must include subjective as well as objective measures:

> "One can list the health services for which the population has coverage; one can measure the facilities and personnel available to provide services; one can measure the health level of the people, but such objective measures will say little about equity or inequities in the system. Fairness is, to a degree, a subjective matter, and it is the obstacles to care each individual has personally had to hurdle that are his measure. He does not care how many physicians per thousand people there are. He is concerned that when he needs a doctor, there is one near whom he can consult. If he must wait for an appointment, if he must leave the area, if he must delay seeking treatment ... he will complain about inequities in the system that conventional objective measures do not reveal."
>
> (Pope, p. 8)

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse indicated they do not expect the same quality or quantity of health services in their northern communities that are available in most large, southern urban centres. They are willing to make allowances. However, as one Whitehorse woman said, "health services are basic needs and should be taken of."

A. Fort Nelson:

Fort Nelson women were most concerned with hospital services. They fear that the hospital cannot cope with present demand and will be increasingly inadequate as the population continues to grow. Many informants also criticized the quality of care they received from individual doctors: they spoke of doctors' unresponsiveness and, in some cases, insensitivity to women's health care needs. Several informants said resident specialists are needed.

Although many women said the Fort Nelson General Hospital was too small, they considered the quality of care and services were good. In particular, the nursing staff was said to be good: however, informants reported that doctors were overworked and the Fort Nelson Medical Clinic was overcrowded. One informant predicted "Fort Nelson will need emergency services if the town grows." Another woman believed "the standards will drop with an influx of people." Perhaps these concerns reflect the fact that our interviews were conducted during the winter months when the population swells with an influx of workers from out of town.

In any case, informants' perceptions do not, for the most part, match the objective measures outlined by the hospital administrator who maintains that Fort Nelson's 41-bed hospital could service a population of over 9,000 based on the requirement of four beds per 1,000 population. He estimated the population to be 5,500 with an additional 3,800 men coming to town for winter jobs in the logging industry. He explained that space, staff, and required services are recommended jointly by the hospital's medical staff and Board of Directors who must demonstrate the need to the Regional District and the Ministry of Health. (Interview with Bob Tarney, Hospital Administrator, Fort Nelson General Hospital, July 1979)

Besides the belief that the Fort Nelson General Hospital was too small, informants were also worried about the quality of care provided by doctors. "They don't know what they're doing"; "they can't diagnose"; "they can't tell what's wrong" were among the women's comments. Many expressed concern that people have to be sent out to larger cities for care "if they have any problems" or "anything uncommon". One woman said that the doctors don't care; another felt "they don't take enough time for individuals"; and several feared that doctors who practiced in Fort Nelson were there because they were not sufficiently good to meet the standards in southern cities.

Many informants spoke of the need for specialists. They emphasized the need for a resident obstetrician/ gynecologist, physiotherapist,chiropractor, optometrist, and another surgeon. Other women said that there were not enough dentists, and those servicing the town were "not good".

Some informants suggested women doctors were needed, as they would be more responsive to women's health care needs and would improve the quality of medical care in Fort Nelson. One informant commented she had had a woman doctor in the past, and "it was nice to have a doctor who didn't say it's all in your head." Other women expressed concern that some doctors in the Fort Nelson area were "pill-pushers", that is, they authorize refills for tranquillizer prescriptions by telephone. Women were particularly worried about the turnover rate among doctors as it meant the doctor many not have ever interviewed the patient and "may not realize the extent of her possible addiction." Several women in Fort Nelson spoke of negative and embarrasing experiences with doctors who made sexist or insensitive remarks during gynaecological examinations or in response to a request for birth control pills.

Ann McQuaid, in her report 'Women in Northern Communities'. outlined problems of health care for women:

> "The problem most consistently isolated in women's groups in northwest British Columbia, besides unemployment, has been health care for women. There are few women's specialists, either obstetricians or gynaecologists, in the north. Doctors are no exception to the rule that many northerners have internalized sexist attitudes, and so are unwilling or unable to explore with their patients alternative approaches for women's health care ... Unless a woman can afford to make a trip to the city, she has little choice but to accept the medical care offered by her doctor."
>
> (McQuaid, p. 8)

The problems to which McQuaid refers are obviously experienced by women in many communities. However, as she suggests, problems for women in northern communities are compounded by the lack of recourse available - referral by a doctor is required before a patient can be flown out to receive alternative medical care. When a woman's doctor considers further medical help unnecessary or indeed doubts that a problem exists at all, women resident in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse have few options.

The study on Tumbler Ridge new town shows that the health care situation outlined by Fort Nelson informants applies to northern resource-based towns in general. Over-worked or unresponsive doctors, high turnover rate among doctors, and the lack of resident specialists are problems shared by most northern resource towns. Such towns have difficulty in attracting and keeping health care professionals. The Tumbler Ridge study also notes that high turnover of doctors often leaves positions unfilled, and this results in over-worked professional staff, less continuity for the patient, and a lower level of service. Some remedies are suggested:

> "Provincial initiatives could help to alleviate the situation. The province does not have any policy of incentives for doctors. Traditionally, doctors, if subsidized, were subsidized by the Company. A comprehensive incentive program sponsored by the province would be more effective in the delivery of health services. Subsidies in the form of guaranteed income and start-up costs have been used sucessfully to attract health care professionals in other provinces. Contributions from the Company, the municipality, or professional associations would be compatible with this scheme."
>
> ('Conceptual Plan',
> Thompson, Berwick and Pratt,
> p. 48)

The provincial government and corporations, as well as municipal officials and health care professionals themselves, have a responsibility to consider these and other remedies to the health care problems identified by Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants.

B. Whitehorse:

Many Whitehorse informants described health services in Whitehorse as"adequate" or "good", but most informants qualified their statements. For example:

> "I think it's good, because I'm a healthy person. But I'd never be operated on up here. I don't trust the quality of care. It's outdated ... the lack of specialists is appalling."
>
> "It's adequate for the size of the community."
>
> "I'd be scared if it (a health problem) was something serious."
>
> "You have to be healthy, otherwise you couldn't live here."

Informants spoke most frequently of the need for specialists and specialized services, emphasizing the need for more gynaecological and physiotherapy services and a resident pediatrician. In addition, women also criticized the inadequate laboratory facilities; the long wait for appointments; the high turnover rate among doctors; and the lack of preventive and holistic approaches to medicine.

Many women who spoke of the need for specialists offeed explanations about why residents specialists were lacking: they suggested the population or patient count is not large enough to warrant or pay for resident specialists. The director of the Department of Health of the Yukon said, "It is a waste of time to service such a small population on a continual basis. There isn't the base to provide full time work." He maintains that having visiting specialists "come in for a week, three or four times a year" means that"we're very well served - on a par with Vancouver and Edmonton ... These specialists work their butts off when they come here, but there isn't the workload to keep, for example, a full-time pediatrician here." (Interview with Tom Duncan, Director, Department of Health, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Several informants disagreed, however, pointing out that existing services are "not meeting the demand" and when specialists do visit "they are booked from morning to midnight." Some informants also contend that since "only basic equipment is available ", specialists may not want to come. And,they added, the clinic administrator probably finds "it is more worth his while financially to bring in general practitioners" as opposed to specialists, the implication being that specialists may not bring as much money into the clinic. One woman suggested, therefore, that the Territorial Government should take responsibility and bring in resident specialists. Another woman said the administrator "certainly underpays the nurses. I don't know about the doctors ... maybe that's why specialists don't come up here."

Jim Pollack, administrator of the Medical Clinic in Whitehorse was asked by researchers to explain the clinic's structure and hiring procedures. He said the doctors own the building and work together "in a partnership which is self-disciplined." He explained that hiring of doctors is controlled by the partnership and based on several factors including "the size of the clinic... and whether there is a need of the particular doctor. A radiologist would starve to death." (Interview with Jim Pollack, Administrator, Medical Clinic, Whitehorse, June 1979). Obviously, as our informants suggested, financial considerations are a factor in the type of doctors hired.

The lack of specialists available in Whitehorse remains a major concern for many women who live there. The availability of doctors in a community is a concern that A.E. Pope recognizes in her study "Equity in Health Care':

> "The comfort one gains from having a doctor available is not related to the use one makes of him, or the likelihood of illness, but rather to the uncertain possibility of illness."

Pope points to additional benefits that accrue not only to patients but also to health care professionals and other residents when specialists reside in the community:

> "There is great pride among members of a community in having particular expertise available in their town. The presence of a specialist in, for example, orthopedics, gynaecology or pediatrics, is something which gives every community member pride because it increased the usefulness of the hospital.
>
> The presence of a specialist is also welcomedby members of the medical profession and other health care professionals. The general practitioner gains an expert consultant near at hand. The other workers are able to use skills that have perhaps been dormant since they finished their training. Both of these effects mean that patients with more complicated conditions can be treated locally.
>
> (Pope, pages 37 - 38)

Women in Whitehorse lack the immediate and extended benefits from resident specialists described above. Informants also pointed out the deficiencies in the quality of health care that result from having visiting specialists who stay for a limited period of time instead of having resident specialists.

> "You have to wait six months for specialists to come up or you fly south for treatment."

> "The services are not adequate because every major problem is flown out for treatment."

> "If the specialist doesn't deal with your problems to your satisfaction, you have to go outside at your own expense - it's your only recourse."

> "After the specialist leaves, follow-up care is a problem."

However, the administrator of the Medical Clinic made it clear he does not believe more specialists are needed in Whitehorse: "The government sends them (visiting specialists) up, pays their way", and, in his op inion "goes way over board with regard to specialists." He did acknowledge it will be necessary not only to replace one of the two resident specialists at the clinic (a surgeon who is leaving), but to hire an additional surgeon because "the work load is getting to the point where it is a problem." The administrator suggested that if residents of Whitehorse are dissatisfied with their access to specialists it is up to them to change the situation - "requests could be made to your MLA or the Yukon Medical Association." Otherwise, it should be accepted as a problem of living in the north: "It's his (the resident's) choice to live up here; it's not like Vancouver or Edmonton." (Interview with Jim Pollack, Administrator, Medical Clinic, Whitehorse, June 1979) His comments suggest that geographical isolation is an acceptable excuse for inadequate health care delivery as well as suggesting that the government should assess how well the area is serviced.

If the problems raised by our informants and their demands for resident specialists are taken seriously and result in a decision to attract and retain specialists, back-up and other services allied to such specialists must be considered. This is detailed by Pope, whopoints out that administrators and planner in other communities have offered a wide range of resources to attract resident specialists and facilitate their work. These include support personnel, housing, financial incentives, construction of facilities and purchase of equipment.

> "All of the hospitals in the Kitimat-Stikine Regional District offered accommodation to hospital staff. Radiology equipment, surgical implements and supporting physiotherapy staff were available for the orthopaedic surgeon in Kitimat."
>
> (Pope, p. 116)

Some Whitehorse informants said "health services have improved tremendously." One woman commented that "as a child I had to go 'outside' even for a tonsillectomy." Many informants felt medical services should continue to be improved since"there's no way, if the pipeline comes, that services will cover the population." Our informants strongly indicated the need for resident specialists, and felt it an area where medical services in Whitehorse could be significantly improved.

In addition to the need for resident specialists, many Whitehorse women were worried about the inadequate laboratory facilities, the difficulty of obtaining appointments, and the long time required to obtain test results. They also questioned if the town's doctors were well qualified.

Some women said they had to wait more than one month to get the results of tests: inadequate laboratory facilities in Whitehorse meant that analysis of many tests has to be carried out in Edmonton. "I had to wait six weeks for pap smear test results" said one woman, and another commented "some doctors even send out x-rays."

Jim Pollack, administrator of the Whitehorse Medical Clinic explained that laboratory tests "have to go outside. The demand for sophisticated tests is not sufficient to incur the capital costs ... it does not justify manpower costs and equipment." However, the clnic does have a "Category 1 lab which does basic pregnancy tests." X-rays are sent out on the morning flight with "results the next day." Lab tests are mailed to the laboratory at the University of Edmonton and "patients have a legitimate bitch because of the time element." Service would be more prompt "if we could eliminate mail." (Interview with Jim Pollack, Administrator, Medical Clinic, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Tom Duncan, director of the Department of Health of the Yukon Territorial Government said that the clinics are approved to analyze certain tests while more comprehensive tests are done in the hospitals and covered by Yukon Health Insurance Services. (Y.H.I.S.) Some tests have to be sent to a private lab, and the hospital has a telephone link with the University of Alberta so tests can be read quickly. He explained the Yukon does not have a lab because "not just anyone can set up a lab; the regulations are stiff." In addition, "a pathologist is needed." (Interview with Tom Duncan, Director, Department of Health, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Whatever the problems in setting up laboratories, our informants' comments indicated they need such a facility. It is surprising that a regional centre such as Whitehorse, which is facing continued population growth, is not planning to fill such a medical need.

Whitehorse doctors are very heavily booked, and it is difficult to get a dental appointment according to many women. They cited "five people waiting for each doctor"at the clinic, and a"three month wait for an appointment with the dentist." The Medical Clinic Administrator estimated that a doctor would see between 20 and 40 patients a day, and he acknowledged that "appointments are double-booked because in their (the doctor's or nurses's) opinion that person has to be seen. We are not double-booked for financial reasons but for emergencies, for example, pregnancies." (Interview with Jim Pollack, Administrator, Medical Clinic, Whitehorse, June 1979). Whatever the justification for double-booking appointments, the fact remains that access to health care and the quality of care is restricted by double-booking.

In addition to inadequate laboratory facilities and appointment delays, several informants questioned doctors' qualificiations, wondering if there are so many (22) doctors in Whitehorse because these doctors are "young people who aren't good enough to stay down south." Others said the doctors "don't take the time to listen"; "don't offer preventative or holistic approaches to medicine"; and "aren't concerned with your past medical history."

The high turnover rate among doctors also elicited much comment from Whitehorse informants. One woman explained "it's hard to get quality people because once they get here it's not what they expected. The money is good but not in keeping with the high cost of living. It's too isolated ... Whitehorse is just an intermediate stopping place till something better comes along down south."

From the women's comments, it is clear they do not consider the medical services available in their community to be adequate.

2.3.2 Mental Health Services

In a proposal for the development of Life-Style Transition Services, the staff of the Houston, B.C. Health and Human Resources Centre identified 'at risk populations' in northern communities. They constructed profiles of people who need special consideration. One at risk population identified is women. As we have seen, women in northern communities often become socially and physically isolated, and experience cabin fever.

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse experience the mental stress that is often a manifestation of the negative aspects of life in northern communities, particularly the isolation and harsh climate. Depression, loneliness and cabin fever are specific elements of mental stress identified by our informants. Involvement in the community and counselling, or having someone 'to talk to', were seen as two factors which were useful in dealing with mental stress.

To focus the description and discussion of mental health services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, it is necessary to have a practical definition of the term 'mental health'. Edith Clark, a health care professional working in Fort Nelson,said: "About 80 per cent of those with problems just need an uninvolved person to talk to." (Interview with Edith Clark, Public Health Nurse, Fort Nelson, April 1979) Commented one Whitehorse woman about a period when she was under stress: "It would have been good to have been able to really talk to someone during the winter when things got a bit foggy."

The term 'mental health' is often associated with severely anti-social behaviour and madness by many people. However, as Sharon Roe, Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse, pointed out that the term mental health should have its negative stigma removed: "It's (mental health) a daily problem, learning to deal with life, improving coping skills." (Interview with Sharon Roe, Whitehorse Mental Nurse, June 1979)

Therefore, based on the statements of Whitehorse and Fort Nelson informants, we will look at mental health services as support services which can help women deal with problems such as depression and cabin fever, problems that are often caused by the isolation, harsh climate, and other factors affecting women who live in northern communities.

A. Fort Nelson:

There are no special mental health services offered in Fort Nelson. Our informants identified this as a serious lack, and said a resident psychologist or psychiatrist and counselling service were desparately needed.

Many informants suggested a mental health clinic or centre should be set up in Fort Nelson. Others, while less specific about the physical facility required, suggested that marriage counsellors, or "some counselling - not necessarily a psychologist" would help. "We need a psychologist closer than Prince George" commented one woman.

It was not sufficient to have a psychiatrist visit periodically according to several informants. An informant described the service offered by a psychiatrist who periodically visited Fort Nelson:

> "Mental health (service) is needed so badly ... About two years ago we had a guy coming up whenever he felt like it. He might come up one month and no one would see him for another three months. He'd arrive on the flight one day and leave the next. It was a useless effort."

Another woman explained "a travelling psychiatrist doesn't do anyone any good" because of "the kinds of problems here - alcohol, depressed people, marital problems - the kind of problems that can't be solved in a day." If women do not receive the assistance they require to deal with loneliness and depression, said one woman, "it breeds self-contempt. I can see how housewives get into the pills and booze trip."

Hospital Administrator Bob Tarney, when asked about mental health services in Fort Nelson, said that mental health patients are referred to a specialist. He said there were not enough cases to warrant a psychiatrist or psychiatric ward at the hospital. (Interview with Bob Tarney, Administrator, Fort Nelson General Hospital, July 1979)

However, this type of response implies a narrow or clinical definition of mental health services, whereas women interviewed identified support services and counselling as a more relevant approach to mental health. One woman spoke of the need for a flexible approach by social service workers. She suggested that although "doctors cannot be expected to serve in the capacity of psychologists, in those areas of the province where medical facilities are limited or non-existent, it is imperative that the Human Resources counsellors be qualified to wear the hats of marriage counsellors, psychologist and child psychiatrist as well as social worker."

A joint proposal to the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Health, from the inter-ministerial committee on the Peace River-Liard region, points out:

> "The region has a number of serious social problems, including mental illness, alcoholism and marital break-up. The relatively small size of the communities involved make it economically difficult for any single service agency to provide adequate service."

The committee recommends that the various concerned agencies work together on a pilot project basis to determine the feasibility of operating shared services which would be available to a variety of troubled people. The pilot project would include: one out-patient counsellor; a Transition House; training for hospital staff to deal with addicted clients; and one social worker and a part time secretary hired by the Mental Health Programs division of the Ministry of Health. (Inter-ministry committee, Peace River-Liard region, 1979, pp. 1,2)

This initiative, if implemented, may represent one step towards the improvement of mental health services in Fort Nelson. Improvement is definitely required in Fort Nelson; the area has no resident mental health specialist, and this falls far short of the Ministry of Health's standards. For an area population of 5,000 to 10,000, Ministry of Health mental health standards do require one psychologist, one psychiatric worker, one mental health nurse, and one support staff person. (Thompson et al, 'Social Plan', p. B5)

When assessed from the standards listed above and our informants' comments, Fort Nelson, with a population estimated at 5,000 persons in the summer and over 8,000 persons in the winter, currently has inadequate mental health service.

B. Whitehorse:

As mentioned previously, Whitehorse does offer some mental health services. However, informants said the lack of choice in services poses problems.They stressed the need for more services, specifically counselling services. And Whitehorse women were highly critical of the services for mental health in Whitehorse. They were described as "inadequate', "about zero", "appalling". Many women spoke of the need for "someone to talk to" and that more services must be available "especially with the long winters." Comments included:

> "There's only one psychologist - that's not adequate for a growing population, like Whitehorse."
>
> "We need counsellors."
>
> "There's only one psychiatric nurse and she's overworked."

The director of the Department of Health, Tom Duncan, explained the mental health program in Whitehorse has two components:

> "If a person needs institutionalizing we

> have to send him outside ... normally to Alberta, but the plan is to bring people back eventually. There is also a local unit here, like 'out-patient treatment' for people who can be kept under control by drugs or counselling, and it's staffed by three people: a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a mental health nurse."
>
> (Interview with Tom Duncan, Director, Dept. of Health, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Mental Health Nurse in Whitehorse, Sharon Roe, described her work and her attempts to provide assistance to residents who do not have to be institutionalized or kept under control by drugs. She said she recognizes that women who are depressed, lonely or suffer from cabin fever are in special need of "community programs - courses dealing with stress and depression - as a preventative approach." She hoped these programs will reach a larger number of people, but more staff are needed. Her work also includes a great deal of 'client treatment' of people who are referred by the psychiatrist , psychologist, doctors, social workers, other agencies or "increasingly people who come on their own because of mild to severe mental health problems, marital problems, emotional problems." Ms Roe sees people "for an initial assessment and a follow-up." This can include "job placements, family adjustment, accommodation, and recommendations on medical prescriptions." In addition to treatment, she acts as a consultant, especially to social service workers in communities outside Whitehorse; she does in-service education for other professionals; and is involved in developing new programs. She tries "to leave two or three morning a week free, which are invariably booked, to see emergencies. It's not often that if you want an appointment you can't get one, but we certainly could use more time in the day. (Interview with

Sharon Roe, Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse, June 1979)

Obviously,mental health services in Whitehorse are considerably more extensive than services available in Fort Nelson. The Mental Health Nurse is clearly aware of and is trying to respond to people's needs. However, as stated earlier in this chapter, many Whitehorse informants find the mental health services inadequate. One woman commented that "lots of people have marriage and family problems and nowhere to go." She commented that a friend had to wait three weeks for an appointment for marriage counselling, and "who wants to wait that long?" Another woman said "doctors don't have time to be counsellors" but, if no one is available when counselling is needed, "the situation often goes to the point of extremes rather than being curbed in the initial stages. Social services work on emergency cases only." An informant employed by a counselling service reported: "The service is very much overworked. In the busy months (which she says are November and March due to the effects of the long winters) people often have to wait three weeks for an appointment."

Several women were concerned about the lack of choice available, and commented that the Department of Human Resources services are not an alternative because "they have a welfare image, and it's embarrassing to go there." Also, women felt, "the kind of people that need help don't go to a government bureaucracy." One woman said there should be more choices especially for the "many young women who don't find the psychiatrist helpful. If someone is referred to the one psychiatrist in town and doesn't want to see him, they're out of luck." She suggests more should be done in the area of "group therapy or out-patient therapy."

Until there is improvement in the mental health service in Whitehorse, many women will continue to feel there is no one to turn to for help as they try to cope with stressful and often frightening situations. One woman talked of such a situation, and her description emphasized the need for support services based on a recognition of the problems women face in northern communities:

> "It scared me during the winter ... the things I was going through. One doctor gave me pills, another suggested I see the psychiatrist. I don't feel safe."

In summary, health services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse do not meet women's needs. Some basic services are available; however, improvements in the quality of medical services are required in both communities. Specifically required are more resident specialists, improved facilities, and increased access to health care professionals. Mental health services must be developed in both communities to respond to the problems of depression, loneliness and cabin fever that women often experience as a result of climate and isolation.

In the study 'Equity in Health Care' Pope defines access to health care:

> "These, then, are the pathways in the maze that lead to health care. If one perceives oneself ill, if one believes the illness can be alleviated, if one has skilled people who can give the treatment and one knows they can, if one can afford to pay for the treatment and if one can afford the time and social disruption involved in obtaining treatment, then one can be said to have access to health care."
>
> (Pope, pp. 33, 34)

From the perspective of the women interviewed for this report, access to health care is not yet a reality for women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

2.3.3. Adult Education

In our society, education is generally recognized as a vital concern, both to the individual and to society as a whole. Adult education in northern communities serves a dual purpose, as it can help prepare women for employment and also provides an opportunity for useful, interesting activity and social interaction. This in turn helps women to deal with the problems of loneliness, depression and cabin fever.

However, informants' comments, particularly from Whitehorse, indicated that available adult education programs fail in both respects. More academic courses and a greater variety of courses are needed as well as vocational programs that fill women's training needs. Courses should be scheduled during the day for homemakers and also in the evenings for women who work outside the home. In addition, childcare should be provided.

Although few Fort Nelson informants spoke of adult education, one informant in Fort Nelson said night school courses were one way to alleviate or prevent the depression that is so prevalent in northern communities; "How not to be depressed? Take 'cheer-up' courses at night school."

Many Whitehorse women want to take adult education courses in order to upgrade their education or to get a degree. Several informants said they want more academic and university courses to be offered for women. They also want more "community college-type" courses and a greater variety of courses - "not all business management, please."

Courses at the Yukon Vocational and Training Centre in Whitehorse were criticized by one informant who said the school "has offered the same courses since it opened." The school was also criticized for not providing more training for non-traditional jobs for women. One informant said professional development programs and in-service education are needed. The teacher training program was praised by one woman because "it trains local people for local jobs - we need more programs like that." Yet another informant called the vocational school's program "token education" and another woman agreed, asking "what's the purpose of the education if jobs are not available upon completion?"

Some informants stressed the importance of courses scheduled during the day so homemakers could take advantage of them. Other women, who are employed outside the home, pointed out they would be unable to attend if vocational courses are scheduled for daytime: "I'd have to quit my job to go there." One woman said she "would take courses but I'd have to get a babysitter and that's costly."

Dan Roberts, director of adult education in Whitehorse, told researchers the priority in adult education is vocational training with "courses offered according to needs in the labour market." (Interview with Dan Roberts, Adult Education Director, YTG, Whitehorse, June 1979)

The principal of the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre, John Reid, said the main interest of the school is "to get those unemployed people back into the job market." He added there are no considerations or provisions for childcare, which he recognizes as a "deterrent" for some women: "They drop out, miss time, if their children are sick." (Interview with John Reid, Principal, Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre, Whitehorse, June 1979) It is obvious that educational and training opportunities for women, whether they are unemployed or not, are not priorities in Whitehorse.

The concept of a 'northern education' in Whitehorse was discussed by several women. "There are no courses to equip people for living in the north, for example, on how to use log construction in building your house" said one informant. Others were certain many people would take courses at a 'University of the North', and "there are too many southern institutions involved in educational programs in Whitehorse" commented one woman. Specific suggestions were made by one informant:

> "There's a need for a northern studies/resource management program here. The proposed University of the North may be able to do these things, and there's no reason why Whitehorse couldn't be the starting point ... Courses on the comprehensive management of resources are sorely needed here."

The Northern Times reported that a team of researchers from the University of Alberta studied adult education in the Yukon, and found the Territory definitely needed its own university. (Northern Times, June 14, 1979) Adult Education Director Dan Roberts advised members of the Whitehorse research team that development of a community college could be anticipated in the future. (Interview with Dan Roberts, Adult Education Director, YTG, Whitehorse, June 1979) The Yukon education minister was quoted in the Northern Times as stating there is a need for an "institute of higher learning." However, in discussing the possible orientation of such an institution, he said he was unsure whether it should be a community college or "a technical institute to fill the demand for qualified tradesmen." (Northern Times, June 8, 1979)

If adult education officials continue to emphasize traditional vocational training to the exclusion of other possibilities, adult education programs will continue to fail to meet women's needs. Women's access to adult education is presently restricted because childcare is not provided. And courses are not designed nor scheduled in accordance with the realities of women's lives.

2.3.4 Recreational and Cultural Activities

Whitehorse and Fort Nelson informants talked of the importance of recreational and cultural activities to the community, and affirmed they "offer a focal point for interaction." Informants considered recreational and cultural activities particularly important as "women have to get out if they want to stay sane", and "women at home with small kids need a central place to meet people."

The Tumbler Ridge new town study identified three categories of personal needs that recreation can fill in resource communities:

> "1) The need for compensatory activities different from work and living environments;
> 2) The need for familiar environments to minimize psychological stress and encourage relaxation;
> 3) The need for community and social contacts to facilitate self-expression in a supportive scene."
>
> (Thompson et al, 'Physical Plan, p. 492)

Our informants indicated they do make use of the cultural and recreation programs available to them. However, many informants in both communities reported their access to recreation is restricted by its high cost. In Fort Nelson specific suggestions were offered to improve recreation: these included the construction of a bowling alley, a gymnasium and more parks. In Whitehorse, women were concerned primarily with the need for improved facilities for recreation and cultural activities. Several Whitehorse women said childcare should be provided in conjunction with recreation programs.

A. Fort Nelson:

Most Fort Nelson informants felt recreational opportunities and activities were adequate in their town. Comments ranged from "alright" to "terrific - everything is covered"; "the pool is beautiful"; "the Fitness Circle is great." Some women qualified their assessments, saying "the facilities are good for the size of the town"; "the town has done as much as they can"; and "more would be welcome."

Many women who said more recreation is needed felt a bowling alley should be constructed. One woman said she'd like a "mini-gymnasium for work-outs" and "a squash court." Another suggested "more park area for camping, picnics, and swimming."

Some Fort Nelson informants were critical of the cost of activities:

> "It's too expensive. We need to take a long hard look at recreation programs, price-wise."
>
> "I'm not satisfied, it's into the money thing and some people just can't afford it. There's not enough free recreation."

One woman voiced concern about the scheduling of activities: "A lot of people don't have suitable hours for using the recreation possibilities. Only those with 'bankers' hours' can do it." Another woman suggested that more advertising is necessary, and "a place to post lists of activities" would help.

Most Fort Nelson women who commented on social or cultural activities spoke of entertainment they could enjoy with their partner or family. Their comments are reported in chapter four of this report - 'Women and Their Work'. Several women said a larger movie theatre is needed in Fort Nelson, and an additional theatre or improved theatre facilities would be useful. Movies seem to be "mostly for kids" said some informants, and they would prefer higher quality films. One woman said she'd like to see "more up-to-date performers here." On the other hand, one informant said she was pleasantly surprised by the cultural activities available in Fort Nelson, and she enjoys the film club and concert series.

B. Whitehorse:

It is evident from our informants' comments that most of them take advantage of the available recreation in Whitehorse. Many women said there is "lots to do", and that they participate in one or more of the following long list of activities: swimming, cross-country skiing, hiking, volley-ball, square-dancing, skating, jogging, fishing, tennis, curling, walking, riding, biking, kayaking, yoga and camping.

The need for improved facilities or indoor facilities "because of the long, cold winters" was the main concern of many Whitehorse informants. Some said the pool should be open all year round; others wanted racquet ball courts and a large gymnasium. Many informants felt these needs would be met if Whitehorse had a recreation complex. One woman said: "If Fort Nelson can operate one then surely we can - it's especially important for the future as Whitehorse grows."

It must be noted that during the first phase of research for this report in March 1979, a plebiscite was held in Whitehorse on a proposal for a recreation complex. Taxpayers were asked whether they were willing to authorize the city to borrow $1.5 million to pay for Phase One of a new recreation complex. This complex would include a swimming pool, curling rink, banquet room, saunas, lounges and an exercise room. (Northern Times, March 23, 1979)

Newspaper reports predicted that most residents would support the concept of a recreation centre. However, the vote was 1075 against and 705 in favour of construction of the centre. Taxpayers were "not prepared to see their taxes jump again to build and maintain the centre" and so they voted against construction. (Northern Times, March 23, 30 and May 10, 1979 coverage). In addition, the newspaper pointed out, the total cost and financing of the centre was not finally determined at the time of voting.

Within two weeks of the vote, Whitehorse City Council had decided to approach the federal government for funds to upgrade the existing recreation facilities. (Whitehorse Star, May 10, 1979) The main impetus for these initiatives appeared to come as much from the city's committment to host the Arctic Winter Games in 1980 as from a desire to respond to residents' needs, including those identified by our informants.

Many Whitehorse informants told researchers they cannot afford the cost of recreation. One woman suggested payment based on a sliding scale should be introduced, with higher fees for businesspersons and companies. Another woman said "the cost is restrictive when you also have to pay a babysitter." The importance of childcare considerations was emphasized by one informant: "I used to be able to exercise regularly, but with a baby there's just nowhere I can go now." The 'Northern B.C. Women's Task Force Report on Single Industry Resource Communities' expressed similar concerns, and offered a workable solution that should be considered in future planning:

> "Recreation as such is not a problem in Mackenzie ... the problem is making use of what is available. There would be more use of existing facilities if some kind of childcare was

> provided along with the activity. The childcare doesn't have to be as sophisticated or structured as a daycare centre, but could be set up as needed when people who register for activities require the extra service to be able to participate. This should be a fundamental service provided by the recreation department."
>
> ('Northern B.C. Women's Task Force Report, pp. 75, 76)

Cultural programs in Whitehorse were considered inadequate by many informants, primarily because adequate physical facilites are lacking:

> "It limits your ability to enjoy a performance if it's shown in a school gym."
>
> "The choral group has no place to rehearse or perform, and ends up using school classrooms or church basements."
>
> "It's pretty bad when the ballet has to be performed on the gym floor."

Several women suggested a theatre should be built to attract more cultural events from outside and more people to attend the performances. They also recommended the encouragement of "the dedicated art society here. They put together an interesting program but they have a low profile, low priority."

Henry Klassen, president of the Yukon Arts Council which is based in Whitehorse, agrees that physical facilities are a problem. He explained the Council began in 1971, originally as a concert society interested in bringing the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra to Whitehorse. The Council, a voluntary organization, subsequently broadened its interests: in 1978 - 1979 it sponsored a range of cultural events including concerts, an opera, a contemporary dance performance, an instrumental group and a Northern Lights College drama group. Each event attracted an average of 200 people "despite the lack of a decent cultural facility." Mr. Klassen said he recommended the Council start a fund-raising drive to build a $2 million hall suitable for all types of performing arts with an art gallery, office space for cultural groups, workshop space and a lecture hall. The Council hopes to raise 10 per cent of the cost and ask the city, territorial and federal government for the remainder. (Interview with Henry Klassen, President, Yukon Arts Council, June 1979, Whitehorse)

The importance of cultural and recreational programs in their lives has been emphasized by the women of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. They do participate in the programs presently available in their communities despite the often high cost, lack of childcare and less than satisfactory facilities. This must be remedied in the future planning of cultural and recreation services. As the Tumbler Ridge study concludes, a community only functions well when there is involvement of its members in their cultural and recreational services. (Thompson et al, 'Physical Plan, p. 496)

2.3.5 Freedom from Fear - Crime and Police Protection Services

The impact of crime on women as individuals, on family members, and on the community in general was talked of by many Whitehorse and Fort Nelson informants. Women's assessment of the effect of crime upon their families is reported in detail in Chapter four of this report.

A major concern of many informants in both communities was the relationship between excessive use of alcohol and crime. Adine Wong,a court worker in Fort Nelson, estimated 98 per cent of crime in Fort Nelson was related to alcohol. Another Fort Nelson woman saw 'drunk-driving' as the most obvious offense but also identified other alcohol-related crimes such as assualt, stabbing, and wife-beating. Whitehorse women expressed similar views:

> "If alcohol and drug abuse were eliminated, the crime rate would diminsh."
>
> "Much of the crime relates to the alcohol problem."

In an article on 'Mental Health Practice in the Yukon', the relationship between excessive use of alcohol and violent crime is outlined:

> "An off-shoot of the heavy drinking in the Yukon is the violence that would appear to be more common here than in other parts of Canada.A complicating factor is that most of the male population carry firearms in their vehicles... With the heavy drinking and weapons being very readily available, violence often ensues."
>
> (Abbott, Kehoe, p. 9)

The crime statistics from both towns and the views of law enforcement personnel support the existence of a link between alcohol abuse and criminal activity. In addition, liquor offences are increasing. In Fort Nelson in the first three months of 1979 there were 54 liquor offences - up from 13 in 1978: charges of intoxication numbered 145 - up from 109 in 1978. (Interview with Sgt. Blair, Fort Nelson RCMP, June 1979) In Whitehorse, liquor-related offences also showed a dramatic increase. In the 1977 - 1978 fiscal year there were 53 liquor ordinance offences and 204 alcohol-related criminal code offences - up from 37 and 166 respectively in 1976 - 1977. (Annual Report of the Corrections Bracnh, 1977/78, p. 47) Sargeant Levy of the Whitehorse RCMP said "If we could beat the alcohol problem we could get rid of the police. I'd bet 90 per cent of the crime is alcohol related." (Interview with Sgt. Levy, Whitehorse RCMP, June 1979)

In an effort to reduce alcohol abuse, Whitehorse City Council placed a ban on public drinking in March 1979. Some concern was expressed in the community that this would be merely a "cosmetic solution" and would merely hide the problem and lead to overcrowding of the correctional system. However, according to RCMP Sgt. Falkingham, when public drinking was banned in two other Yukon towns - Dawson City and Tesling - crime rates showed a substantial decrease. (Northern Times, March 13, 1979)

In addition to alcohol-related crimes, women referred to crimes that made them feel afraid. They referred specifically to violence against women - rape and wife beating - as well as vandalism and 'breaking and entering.' These were characterized as serious problems by informants in both communities.

The ability of the police protection services in their community to cope with current and anticipated crime was discussed by informants. They reported an increase in the number of police in both towns in the past year. In Fort Nelson, many women also described a change in the type of police officer, noting that there are now more experienced officers. Several informants suggested this indicated the type of crime being committed is more serious. Police were generally considered to be competent , but it was felt they were not yet dealing effectively with the crimes of rape and wife-beating. Overall, informants reported that crime is increasing. They feel crime is "closer" to them. And they don't feel safe.

A. Fort Nelson:

Vandalism was considered to be the most prevalent problem in Fort Nelson said our informants. One woman feared that those individuals committing vandalism would eventually commit more violent crime. Several women identified breaking and entering, arson and auto theft as the most pressing problems.

Sargeant Blair of the Fort Nelson RCMP told researchers there has been "a definite increase" in crime but "no increase in breaking and entering, vandalism or violent crime. It's theft of vehicles and articles from vehicles." Drug problems are also increasing according to Sgt. Blair. (Interview with Sgt. Blair, RCMP, Fort Nelson, June 1979) Statistics he provided show thefts of over $200 have increased from 12 recorded in 1978 to 23 recorded in 1979; breaking and entering from 25 to 40 instances; assault from 29 to 31 instances; and trespass and destruction of property increased from 70 instances in 1978 to 186 in 1979.

Fort Nelson court clerk Adine Wong provided the following statistics which compare court cases completed in the first three months of 1977, 1978, and 1979: a marked increase is noticeable in 1979.

	1977	1978	1979
January	21	26	39
February	28	17	49
March	23	35	73

Ms Wong told the Chamber of Commerce, at a meeting reported by the Fort Nelson News, that court facilites are overcrowded and that her caseload has increased well over 30 per cent in the past year. (Fort Nelson News, March 14, 1979)

In an interview with researchers Ms Wong also confirmed what several informants suspected; that "outsiders" are responsible for the increase in crime. "According to a random check of traffic tickets," she said, "more new people in town have records for things like assault and armed robbery. (Interview with Adine Wong, Court Clerk, Fort Nelson, April 1979)

Sargeant Blair of the Fort Nelson RCMP explained "there's a higher number of parolees in the area. Since employment is easier to get in Fort Nelson, parolees get transfers from the district they're in and come to find the work."

The Editor of the Fort Nelson News, Judith Kenyon, told our researchers that "earlier in the year (1979) there was a series of unusual crimes - alleged rape, suicide pacts, violence and accusations of police violence against civilians," which the RCMP attributed to "transients looking for work." (Interview with Judith Kenyon, Fort Nelson News, June 1979)

The recent changes in the police force were commented on by several informants. In response to the rising incidence or changed pattern of crime,one informant said "they are posting a different type of cop here. It used to be the rookies here because it was a small town and they more or less trained them here and then sent them to bigger places. They are now sending family men and single men and it is more evened out for the types of cops." Another woman said: "No more rookies, these guys are experienced." Many informants suggested more police will be needed in the future as the population increases.

The majority of informants said the police are "doing a good job." The Fort Nelson News also reported the Fort Nelson RCMP detachment was "Number One in their region for solving crimes" according to a "statistical report from Prince George." (Fort Nelson News, January 10, 1979) However, several women were not satisfied with police performance, commenting that "they rough people up - especially Indians."

Rape and the inadequate response of the RCMP to rape was a concern of some informants. An informant said she "has come across a number of rapes in her volunteer work." Some suggested Fort Nelson needs a crisis line and counselling services for rape victims. Several said rapes have been committed and people ought to be informed: "If they'd let people know then precautions could be taken." Sargeant Blair, in describing the RCMP's community education programs in Fort Nelson said: "We have a drug and rape session, school talks." However, he is "not sure about community involvement because, for example with the Neighbourhood Watch Program, by the time you get right through the community, we'd have to start all over then because people move in and out so fast." Sgt. Blair also said there is nothing police can do about wife-beating, a concern raised by some of our informants. Blair contends that wife-beating is not any worse in Fort Nelson than in other places: "A couple a week - we are aware that there are more but they go unreported. Even if we hear of them through the 'grape-vine' there is nothing we can do."

This attitude is common in law enforcement agencies in many other communities throughout Canada. Some police forces, however, are trying to find effective ways of dealing with wife-battering and rape. The efforts being made in Whitehorse to deal with rape are reported later in this chapter, and methods of dealing with the problem of wife-battering are outlined in the 'United Way Task Force on Family Violence'. (pp. 14, 15)

The concerns about rape and wife-battering expressed by Fort Nelson women are significant. The RCMP detachment in Fort Nelson clearly has a responsibility to respond.

B. Whitehorse:

Whitehorse women who spoke about crime in their community said they feel less safe because crime is increasing. It feels much closer to them, and they feel threatened:

> "Whitehorse used to be a much better place to live. Just last night a woman was murdered across the street. Soon it won't be safe for anyone."

> "It's so close up here. I feel it could be right around the corner."

Women spoke about their fears to researchers: "I don't feel safe. I never felt this fear in Toronto. I don't like being afraid and having these feelings." Another informant said "crime is more obvious in a city the size of Whitehorse, because you more than likely know the criminal or have seen him around. It's more frightening than in a big city where you're more removed from it." She gave the example of a murder that had been committed the previous week:"The murderer was a customer in the bank, I remember him well."

Several Whitehorse informants did suggest that crime is blown out of proportion by the reports in newspapers and other media. However, they also commented there are "more RCMP around than there used to be." A few women said there's not much crime in Whitehorse or at least "nothing really that bad."

Yet most informants believe the crime rate in Whitehorse has increased. They pointed to a variety of indicators to support their belief. "Doors have to be locked now; they didn't before." And "police cars patrol our area regularly now - we never used to see them out here." One woman said the RCMP is expanding its services. Her husband, who works in the RCMP, told her that "it won't take long to fill the new (RCMP) building." She added that "in the summer they need more RCMP than they can get, but in the winter the local force seems to be able to handle it." Several informants suspect that "crime is bound to get bad as the population grows."

According to Yukon government officials, the Whitehorse crime rate is high and has increased. The Northern Times, in an article headlined 'Yukon likened to police state', reported a budgetary debate in the legislature during which the Minister of Justice, Doug Graham, justified the 30 per cent increase in the number of Yukon RCMP since 1974 by pointing to a dramatic rise in the crime rate. (Northern Times, March 23, 1979) RCMP statistician, Sargeant Presunka, told researchers the Yukon accounts for 1 per cent of the actual crime committed in Canada but accounts for only .69 per cent of Canada's population. He also provided statistics which show an increase in incidents of breaking and entering from 324 instances in 1977 to 460 in 1978. (Interview with Sgt. Presunka, RCMP, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Murder, vandalism, rape and wife beating were crimes most often mentioned by informants besides alcohol-related crimes. Several informants spoke at length of rape and noted that "often it's not reported." The co-ordinator of the Women's Centre in Whitehorse identified rape as one of the most common reasons why women came to the centre for help. (Interview with Shelia Benson, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Researchers of this report encountered two very different perspectives on rape when they interviewed police officers. An RCMP constable made the statement which reflects a common misconception about rape, and constitutes a general problem for women:

> "There is not a lot of rape - one last year. A lot of what is reported as rape is not rape. It is often reduced to a lesser charge for the convenience of the court and to save embarassment for the girl."
>
> (Interview with Constable
> Doug Hopaluk, RCMP,
> Whitehorse, June 1979)

It is generally difficult to get accurate statistics on the incidence of rape, in part because victims have been understandably reluctant to report it. Rape victims are also afraid they will not be believed or taken seriously, or that the justice system will be unresponsive or won't care. Given the constable's comments, women's fears are justified and women are, in fact, in a double-bind. If women do not report rape cases, police officials declare rape is not a problem according to their statistics; when women do report rape some police or justice system officials decide it is not really rape at all or it is reduced to a lesser charge "for the convenience of the court."

Fortunately, a second police officer, RCMP Sargeant Levy, expressed views more in line with current research on rape. Sargeant Levy outlined some of the first steps the RCMP has taken on the issue. "Rape could be a problem, if you could get reliable statistics. There are about four or five rapes a year. If 10 more cases go unreported for each one that is reported, we could have a problem here." He said the RCMP started a "Lady Beware Program - I'm sure we spoke to every women's group in town about rape." In addition, he said there is now a film on rape available for public education use. (Interview with Sgt. Levy, RCMP, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Wife beating was a problem talked of by several informants. One woman said she learned from a friend who works with the RCMP that officers are "being trained to deal with family crises" such as wife beating. RCMP Sargeant Levy was asked about family violence and replied: "Yes, a fair number (of cases) come in." He said that child abuse is a problem "we'll see a lot of emphasis put on in the next few years ... we need a child abuse team." (Interview with Sgt. Levey, RCMP, Whitehorse, June 1979) However, he did not indicate that any program or effort is planned or in place to deal with wife beating.

A proposal by the Yukon Indian Women's Association (YIWA) for a Transition Home for Whitehorse women outlined the problems battered wives face, pointing out that a major part of the problem is that "physical and psychological abuse against women and their children is sanctioned by society when it occurs in the home. Many women - 'battered wives' - tolerate these situations ... because there is no answer to the question of 'where will I go and what will I do?'" The proposal states "there is a real and pressing need for a responsive and supportive resource to meet the needs of women in crisis." (Yukon Indian Women's Association, p. 2) The RCMP is of course included in the list of agencies and organizations with which the Transition Home would develop strong working relationships, mutual referrals and information exchange.

The Whitehorse RCMP has developed the Neighbourhood Watch Program to reduce the incidence of breaking and entering, and it has begun to address the problem of rape. Hopefully, the RCMP will also work with the Transition Home and begin to deal with the crime of wife beating.

In summary, women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are concerned about the rising crime rate and the changing pattern of crime. Although many have confidence in the police services to protect them and their community, many others said they are increasingly afraid. Women's confidence in police protection services in the future will depend, in some measure, on police response to the crimes of rape and wife-beating.

2.3.6. Transportation Services

> "Most resource towns are located in relatively isolated settings at some distance from major centres. For this reason, and because of the attendant feelings of isolation prevalent among the residents of resource towns, improving accessibility by 'decreasing the friction of space' is of great significance. It has been argued that increasing mobility or maximizing the possibility for access is more important for improving the quality of living than minimizing the need for it by creating self-contained towns."
>
> (Riffel, p. 28)

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse commented on two aspects of transportation: transportation as access to the 'outside' - or what Riffel would term "decreasing the friction of space"; and secondly, transportation as access inside the community to services, work, shopping, recreational and social activities. Both aspects of transportation are important factors in minimizing the isolation, loneliness and depression women in northern communities often experience.

However, informants identified increasingly expensive air fares as a major problem in access to the 'outside'. Access to basic services inside the community is also difficult for many women in Fort Nelson, where there is no public transit system. In Whitehorse the Mini-Bus System, which women themselves initiated and developed, has increased women's access to services, but informants said the service should be expanded.

A. Services to the 'Outside'

One Whitehorse woman summarized the view expressed by many informants about transportation to points outside their communities. "Making the south more accessible for visiting, shopping and holidaying would improve the quality of life up here." Although Fort Nelson informants spoke in less detail, women in both communities made it clear that as important as access to the 'outside' is to them, it is out of their reach mainly because of the high cost of airfares: "It's so expensive to fly out - it only intensifies the isolation." And "if we didn't get our way paid out once a year by the government we would likely never get out."

Many informants maintained that northern residents are victims of the airlines. One Fort Nelson woman said "the airlines are taking advantage of the isolation in the north with exorbitant airfares." Several Whitehorse informants noted that in practice "CPAir has a monopoly." "CPAir can "take advantage of northern people because people will pay anything to go outside" said one informant. "We're being ostracized by high costs," according to a Whitehorse informant, and she suggested there should be a Department of Transportation subsidy in recognition of "the need to get out."

Al Vance, Sales and Service Manager for CPAir in Whitehorse, suggested the government, not CPAir, is responsible for the high rates. Mr. Vance justified the price of air fares, telling researchers "the Company does not set fares, it suggests them and the government approves or not." CPAir applied for lower rates in December 1978, according to Mr. Vance, but after being turned down in

February 1979 the lower rates were approved in April 1979. Mr. Vance pointed to the "special Yukon arrangement" for low cost totem fares that requires bookings only seven days in advance for a lower priced flight, opposed to the required 30 days in advance booking that applies, for example, to Winnipeg customers. He acknowledged "CPAir is a lucrative business here ... I'm proud of the cost factor" explaining that "CP's costs are higher in Whitehorse than elsewhere ... 0.3 cents per mile higher Vancouver to Whitehorse than Vancouver to Winnipeg, but CP charges passengers the same rate per mile as in the south. This means CP loses money." In addition, he pointed out maintenance costs are higher, especially in winter. (Interview with Al Vance, CPAir, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Although Mr. Vance stressed the cost advantages provided by CPAir, Ed Ogden,the Vice-President of Sales and Services for CPAir told the public that rates are likely to rise in the coming months due to inflationary pressures related to fuel, labour, and terminal expenses: "You will never see lower cost air transportation than we're enjoying at the present time. While you'll see fares go up they are not going to go up out of sight." He said Whitehorse air traffic business was in a healthy state, helped, in some measure, by pre-pipeline concerns. (Northern Times, June 19, 1979)

However, for many of our Whitehorse informants airfares are already "out of sight." Further increases will further decrease their access to the "outside" and intensify their isolation.

Ian Gray, President of CPAir's western Canada services recognizes, according to a report in the Fort Nelson News, "there is a high degree of dependency on our services in the cities and smaller communities in this area. Despite our higher cost of operation compared with the mainline trans-continental routes, we believe that our customers in the non-metropolitan areas also are entitled to low cost travel provided their plans can be flexible and they can meet the necessary conditions." (Fort Nelson News, March 14, 1979)

Several informants commented on the "flexibility" that is required of them because of CPAir's flight schedules. They noted that the service is "unreliable"; that the local Whitehorse office is "deficient in reporting flight delays to the passengers"; and that the flight schedules for both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse necessitate lengthy and inconveninent stopovers. Several women said they felt powerless to change this situation.

The alternatives to air travel also pose difficulties. One Fort Nelson woman commented the inter-city bus leaves too early in the morning for convenience, and there is no waiting area. A Whitehorse woman points out that the bus service is expensive and very difficult for a woman travelling with children because of the long hours of travel time involved. To drive one's own car on the highways out of Whitehorse is hazardous, according to several women, as the roads are in poor conditon and dangerous in cold weather.

The options open to women who cannot afford CPAir's fares are very limited. The President of CPAir's western Canada Services is right: there is a high degree of dependency on CPAir services in the north. Ever-increasing rates and inconvenient flight schedules do not constitute an acceptable response to northern women's concerns as reflected by our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

B. Services inside Fort Nelson and Whitehorse

The widespread physical layout of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse make transportation services especially important for many women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

Fort Nelson has no public transportation system. Many informants spoke of the need for a bus system, even if the service was limited to two or three runs a day. This was vital to people who live in the 'East Sub', near the airport, or on the outskirts of town, " so that women could go shopping, for example." However, several informants felt that bus service was not feasible. One woman commented that she'd "like public transportation but if they can't afford to clean the streets how can they afford public transportation?" Taxi service was said to be too expensive to be a suitable alternative means of transportation.

Until 1976 there was no public transit system in Whitehorse. In an article entitled 'Urban Sprawl - The Price Women Pay', the authors described how the Yukon Women's Mini-Bus System in Whitehorse developed from a study undertaken by the Yukon Status of Women Society:

> "The Council studied the effects of isolation on women and children in Whitehorse. It found that day-to-day life was claustrophobic for the women who had no access to stores, schools and businesses. Long, cold winters further aggravated the strain. The mini-bus system was designed to make the city centre accessible to women and to provide them with high paying, part-time jobs."
>
> (Carter, Wekerle, p. 13)

The Whitehorse Mini-Bus System employs 15 drivers, operates four buses (and has two spare buses), and carries a passenger load of 1,000 persons per day. (Interview with

Wenda Nairn, Transit Manager, Whitehorse Mini-Bus System, June 1979)

Most informants in Whitehorse reported the mini-bus system is "wonderful", "impressive", and one said, "I admire the women who got it started." They urged that "it should be supported more - subsidized." One woman said the Mini-Bus System is the greatest thing that ever happened for the 'sense of city' in Whitehorse. It offers valuable linkage between the rural areas and downtown." There were two negative comments: one woman said the bus was often late, and another said "we can't rely on it." Women said they used the mini-bus mostly for getting to and from work and for grocery shopping.

The most common suggestion for improvement to the Mini-Bus System was extended service, especially Friday night service and more runs on the weekend. One woman said the service should be extended to more suburbs, and noted "there's a problem living out of town in the winter." Some women said the buses should be bigger: "It's usually packed in the morning and evening rush hours."

The Northern Times reported in May 1979 that a $282,000 grant had been awarded the Mini-Bus System for four new passenger buses, three 35 passenger buses and radio equipment which will allow the system to extend its service to areas of Whitehorse not previously served. (Northern Times, May 15, 1979) The Transit Manager, Wenda Nairn, told researchers for this report that runs are added to the service according to public demand. She said new service, for example Friday night service, is tried on an experimental basis and incorporated into the regular service if service standards are met. A 'dial a bus' experimental service is being considered as well as some special services for the handicapped and others with special needs.

In conclusion, the need for extended mini-bus service in Whitehorse and the absence of transportation services in

Fort Nelson limits many women's access to basic community services. Access to the 'outside' is severely restricted, for women in both communities, because air fares are too expensive and alternatives to air travel are impracticable.

2.4 SUMMARY

Women in the northern communities of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse appreciate the physical beauty of the wilderness and landscape. They enjoy the recreational opportunities their environment provides. They also recognize the economic advantages of living in northern resource towns - namely employment for them and/or their partner. For many women, living in the north is preferable to living in southern cities; it offers greater opportunities in business or community involvement, and a better atmosphere in which to raise their children.

Yet the women interviewed are not blind to the problems of their community, including the geographical isolation from other cities and, in many cases, isolation from family and friends, and stresses of long, cold, dark winters. Many have taken the initiative in trying to overcome these problems, both for themselves and for others in the community, by volunteer work in church groups, service clubs, recreation and education programs; and by organizing women's centres, and in Whitehorse, the Mini-Bus System and a Transition House.

However, many of the problems they face are exacerbated by corporate and government actions. High air fares, which have the effect of restricting travel to the 'outside', increase the sense of isolation. Alcohol abuse, in part stemming from the isolation, is recognized as a general problem in the north and a contributing factor in the rising crime rate. However, extensive use of alcohol also puts more money into the coffers of the governments that are responsible for alcohol distribution and for the presently inadequate alcohol treatment programs. Community stability is often undermined by the transiency of workers imported for a time-limited stay when a particular resource extraction or government project is undertaken.

To overcome the depression, loneliness, or cabin fever that often result from the combined factors of isolation, climate and a sense of community instability, women have access to adult education programs that fail to reflect many of their needs and to recreation or cultural activities that are too expensive for some and limited by facilities that are in need of improvement. Mental health services, counselling and support services for women who need assistance in coping with the particular stresses of climate and isolation, are practically non-existent in Fort Nelson and inadequate in Whitehorse.

The lack of a transit system in Fort Nelson contributes to the isolation many women experience within that community, and also it limits their access to all community services. In Whitehorse, these problems are less severe for some women because the Mini-Bus System meets their transportation needs; for others, bus service must be extended before they will be able to take advantage of it.

Geographical isolation and the very fact that Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are northern communities are offered by some health care officials as a justification for inadequate medical services.

In short, Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women need improved basic services in their communities now. With the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline, the need will become more acute. Governments and corporations, which will benefit from pipeline construction, have a responsibility to mitigate against the negative impact of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline, and should begin by improving established community services immediately.

3.0 THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - COMMUNITY PLANNING AND HOUSING

> "Men tend to view the home as a retreat from urban stress and a source of status. They often prefer a marked separation between work and home life. Women tend to view the home more as an expression of self, a place to raise children and a location which provides them access to jobs, services and friends."
>
> (Wekerle, Carter, p.13)

The home and neighbourhood are central to women's lives. Since women bear the major responsibility for management of the household and care of children, the home is a work environment as well as a shelter and refuge. In addition, the nature of women's work provides women with a particular perspective on their neighbourhood or community. For example, women's responsibility for the care of children makes them aware of the importance of having safe communities. Women generally use the community differently than men do. Women "live" in neighbourhoods; men come home to them.

This chapter examines some of the difficulties women face when their needs and perspectives are not taken into consideration by town planners. It concentrates on housing, an issue which informants from both Whitehorse and Fort Nelson considered a major problem. However, women comment on many facets of their physical environment including the actual layout and design of their communities, and the servicing and maintenance of individual neighbourhoods as well as housing.

From the community descriptions presented in the preceding chapter, it is clear that in terms of design the communities of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse differ. Yet women from both towns voiced similar concerns about community stability and access to services. The lack of integration of their communities inhibits their access to services and makes it more difficult to have a "sense of community." Inadequate servicing and maintenance of their communities makes their neighbourhoods unsafe and detracts from community pride.

Living in a northern community presents special conditions which affect women's needs and perspectives on housing, and Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women spoke at length of the problems they encounter. Their housing needs are not being met. Affordable housing built for northern conditions is in short supply in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

Informants spoke of the importance of suitable housing and community planning to their lives and their families' lives. The problems are not only immediate realities but are also problems that will be magnified by the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline.

3.1 COMMUNITY PLANNING

Numerous studies on the community development and planning requirements of northern towns have been done: these include Thompson, Berwick and Pratt's Tumbler Ridge new town development studies and Linn and Stabler's 'Economic, Social and Planning Requirements for Northern Communities'. Several basic needs common to all communities are identified by these studies. These include the need for some kind of community identity and stability, and the need for easy access to services. Women in both towns spoke of these needs at length, and emphasized problems they faced due to the lack of adequate planning.

A major concern of women in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse was community stability. Suzanne Veit prepared a report on 'Labour Turnover and Community Stability: Implications for North East Coal Development in B.C.' for the federal/provincial Manpower Sub-committee on Northeast Coal Development. She defined some of the components of a stable community as an established core population; a sound economic base; social service network, programs and facilities; a low rate of criminal activity; and citizen participation. (Veit, 1978, p.IV-37)

The importance of establishing a strong sense of community is stressed in the Linn and Stabler report which outlines the requirements for planning northern communities:

> "The town design stresses centralization .... It is hoped that the individual citizen will identify more strongly with the community, for if the town is to be socially viable, a strong sense of community must exist."
>
> (Linn, Stabler, p.5-13)

The quantity and location of subdivisions was the cause of a lack of sense of community in Whitehorse as a whole, according to many informants. Whitehorse was seen as "a separate bunch of little communities." Other women commented that:

> "Whitehorse is split, there are too many subdivisions."
>
> "People tend to segregate according to the area they live in. It's easy to get out of touch with people in one area if you live in another."
>
> "Growth and the increase in population have tended to divide the city into little segments ....I think most people are concerned about their own area - not the Whitehorse population in general."

Several informants said they identified with their own subdivisions as the community, rather than Whitehorse in general. This was particularly true in the areas of Riverdale, Porter Creek and Takhini. In Takhini the residents are mainly government employees and tended to share common interests and concerns:

> "Everyone in the area is in government housing and is a government employee."
>
> "Everyone has something in common - we are all government employees and we all live in houses that are exactly the same."

Takhini was said to be a very transient neighbourhood as the government employees who live there were subject to frequent transfers. Porter Creek residents are physically isolated from the rest of Whitehorse:

> "Porter Creek is a community of its own. We're just sort of sitting out here away from everything. I think the other subdivisions are closer. If Porter Creek had a few more services it would be like a town on its own."

Residents of Riverdale tend to be business and professional people with young children. They live in the area to be close to schools and shopping:

> "Riverdale is a choice location. It is close to schools, the bus goes by the door, and we have all the luxuries."
>
> "Most of the business and professional people live in Riverdale because it is close to downtown and the elite place to live."

Some Whitehorse women saw this trend toward segregated communities as changing. All stressed the need for greater integration among the subdivisions:

> "The community of Whitehorse has a long history of government, army and air force which has

> tended to divide the city into geographical segments ... Barriers have been put up to normal community patterns as a result. These barriers are gradually being broken down."
>
> "I don't feel each area of the city should have separate facilities. All Whitehorse should share common facilities."

Due to the design of the communities of Whitehorse and Fort Nelson, informants reported problems in getting access to some of the available services. Fort Nelson has no public transportation within the city. Whitehorse does have a mini-bus system, but informants emphasized that the services needed to be expanded. Whitehorse covers 162 square miles: some of the housing areas are several miles from the downtown core. In spite of the bus service, Whitehorse is as much a car-oriented city as Fort Nelson. Many of our informants did not always have access to a vehicle, and they spoke of the great difficulty they had in getting around their towns particularly in winter. One of the major complaints of the women was that shopping facilities were located away from residential areas and were impossible to get to without a vehicle. The special transportation needs of women are more fully dealt with in the preceeding chapter, 'Women in Northern Communities'.

The location of recreation facilities and schools was a problem spoken of by many women. They were concerned for their children's safety, and stressed the need for playgrounds and schools to be located nearer residential areas.

The general lack of sidewalks and the poor condition and maintenance of roads in the communities was a problem mentioned by many women. This hampered the women's mobility, and they worried about their children's safety.

Several Fort Nelson women mentioned that the construction of "sidewalks on all the streets should be a priority."

They felt the few sidewalks there were should be better maintained and that the village should accept responsibility for keeping them sanded. Two women said it was very difficult to manoeuver a stroller around the town given the poor quality sidewalks and the deep curbs. According to one informant, it was "a hazard walking anywhere" in Fort Nelson. In Whitehorse, women referred to sidewalks as "luxuries" and noted that they only existed in certain areas of the city.

Fort Nelson informants expressed concern over the condition of the roads in their community. These concerns were shared by Mr. Hollman, village planner for Fort Nelson. In a report on the future housing requirements of Fort Nelson, Hollman stressed the need for road improvement and commented on the "poorly planned road network, steep grades of roads linking the lower and upper elevation within the Village." (Hollman, p.10)

The condition of roads in Whitehorse was also a problem reported by our informants. One woman noted that "municipal things like road maintenance and snow removal are deplorable here. I'm sure we have the worst downtown streets of any town in Canada."

Inadequate street lighting and traffic lights and poorly maintained crosswalks were other issues raised by Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants. The lack of lighting and sidewalks was of great concern to the women as they feared for the safety of their children. The lack of dog control also caused Fort Nelson women to worry about their children's safety:

> "I went for a walk last spring, and was followed by a pack of ten dogs. When I called the Village, all they could say was, 'We can't patrol all the time.' Two full time patrollers are needed right now to get rid of a lot of animals."

> "There should be stiff animal control laws ... It makes walking unpleasant, even dangerous for kids."

An animal control service was instituted by the Fort Nelson Village Council in 1972 but the women interviewed felt it was no longer able to cope with the problem.

Another major concern of the women in Fort Nelson was the fire department. Women felt that the fire hall itself needed upgrading and one informant commented that a regular, hired fire department staff was needed. "How about a steady, hired fire department staff? The volunteers are good once they get to the fire, but I think there's too long between the siren and getting to the fire."

In Whitehorse one of the major deficiencies women spoke of was the lack of mail services. One informant lived in Riverdale, an area which has mail delivery while other areas do not. To her, "mail delivery is the height of my day and I wouldn't want to sacrifice that service for a move to the newer areas." Informants in Porter Creek, an area that has no sub-postal station, were unhappy about having to go downtown to mail parcels and buy stamps.

Some Fort Nelson informants thought a lane system behind their homes would be useful for garbage services. One woman said lanes would be useful as "a lot of the houses have paths through their backyards and my fence has been broken down because of this."

The appearance of their towns was of concern to women in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Women in Fort Nelson spoke of "pollution in the form of litter on the streets." They felt their towns should be "cleaned up" and there should be "regulations for lot maintenance." Both Whitehorse and Fort Nelson were engaged in campaigns to enhance their downtown areas, but one woman from Fort Nelson said this was a misplaced priority as "some streets are without sewers and water."

3.2 SUMMARY - COMMUNITY PLANNING

It is essential that planners respond to the needs of the women residing in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Many of the women interviewed spend a large proportion of their time in their homes and neighbourhoods. They depend on community services, and the quality and design of their neighbourhoods directly effects their lives. Their need for community stability, increased access to services, and improved servicing and maintenance of their communities must be integral aspects of any present or future planning initiatives.

3.3 WOMEN AND HOUSING

3.3.1 Introduction

In evaluating the wide range of issues raised by our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, housing emerged as one of the many central issues for women in both communities.

For women, the home is not only a shelter or refuge, it is also a work environment. Much of a woman's work takes place in the home, either by choice or necessity; whether she is married or single; employed outside the home or not. Women bear the major responsibility for house maintenance, care of children, preparation of meals, and overall management of the household.

In the north, women are often confined to their homes alone with their children for long periods. They are confined to their homes because the extreme winter weather makes it difficult to get out of the house; their partner's work takes him out of town for weeks or months at a time; and recreation and entertainment facilities are often inaccessible. Therefore, women have particular housing needs and perspectives on housing. However, as Veit points out in her study, women's needs and perspectives have not been reflected in existing research on housing:

> "Women at home suffer the brunt of poor house design on a day-to-day basis ... One of the gaps in the literature is the paucity of documented, detailed resident perception on home design in the north."
>
> (Veit, 1978, p.III-35)

Women interviewed for this report were specifically asked to comment on housing, and in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse they had a great deal to say. They talked about what type of housing they and their families need, about currently available housing, and about the problems they face due to the current housing situation.

3.3.2 Housing Needs

Our informants in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson identified particular needs related to housing, focussing mainly on the location of housing; house size, type and quality; and the cost of housing.

A. Location of housing:

Access to community services is a determining factor for many women in deciding where to live. Along with the need for privacy and environmental considerations, several informants believe that access to community services should be taken into account in residential planning. In particular, they felt that the development of subdivisions, and the location of community services should be carefully considered.

Women preferred housing close to the services they needed, near their own or their husband's work, schools, shopping and recreation facilities.

> "Riverdale is a choice location because it is close to schools and stores, and the bus goes by the door."
>
> "I rented a place to be close to work, shopping and library - to be central."
>
> "Everything seems to be at one end of town, away from the residential area."
>
> "I would like to see more recreation facilities in the East Sub (of Fort Nelson) since that is where the people live. I find I have to drive the kids to sports since I don't want them going past the hotels with all the drunks around."

One informant criticized the choice of location for a new subdivision in Fort Nelson, pointing out that it "is being put right in the middle of a swampy area. It's too close to the lagoon - its dangerous for kids." Others commented there is a need for stores, schools and playgrounds to be built in residential areas.

Several Whitehorse women talked of the need for privacy in their neighbourhood. "There is a lack of privacy in the neighbourhood. We live too close physically and socially," said one woman. Another informant said that "we all keep our distance because everyone's space is so small."

Women in both communities commented on the need for houses to be located where they can take advantage of the natural beauty of the north. In Whitehorse the women wanted houses on the green-belt for "the sense of openness and contact with the wilderness." As one woman said, it simply "makes more sense to build houses in congruence to the environment and contours of the land." In Fort Nelson some informants talked about using more bush areas as natural recreation or "rest areas". They would be "something for the soul - just a few trees and flowers and, please, some grass." And one Fort Nelson woman asked "why are they taking down all the trees in the new subdivision?"

Whitehorse women pointed out the need for houses to be positioned to catch the most sun: "Home location is important up here ... It's important that the house be situated so you make sure you get sun for those extra months of light on the house. That makes a real difference up here." This is confirmed by Linn and Stabler in their report, 'Economic, Social and Planning Requirements for Northern Communities':

> "Dwellings should be orientated towards the south as much as possible in order to maximize the available sunlight during the short days of long northern winters."
>
> (Linn and Stabler, p.3-32)

From the women's comments it is clear that the location of a woman's home can enhance or devalue the quality of life of herself and her family. Most women seem to appreciate the advantages living in the north offers and they are obviously prepared to adapt to make the best of less than satisfactory circumstances. Their needs are not extreme, and their statements substantiate points that many planners and researchers have already raised. Women's needs and suggestions must be taken into account in future residential planning in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

B. House size:

Indoor play space for children, storage space, and room for entertaining at home are crucial needs of women in northern communities. To many women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse the need for safe play areas, both indoor and outdoor, was a priority. The lack of such play areas increases the stress on all members of the family. One woman said she was often depressed because she was "confined to this little cold house with small children." "There are no safe fenced-in areas for kids, in fact the playgrounds are dangerous and distant from the populated areas," said one Fort Nelson woman. She suggested developers should be "forced to supply both indoor and outdoor play areas for kids. This would help ease the burden on families - mother wouldn't be so frazzled by the time dad gets home from work."

'Safe children's play space' is one of the inspection criteria used by the Whitehorse Housing Authority in assessing defects of present housing. (Interview with Stu Muir, Manager, Whitehorse Housing Authority, June, 1979) In addition, the Fort Nelson Town Planner, D. Hollman, stated in his report on 'Requirements for Future Housing in Fort Nelson' that people have requested larger lots to accommodate "storage and accessory buildings like workshops and green houses and generally to build a larger than average house. Since much more time is spent indoors, children's rooms, playrooms and recreation rooms have much more meaning here than in areas of mild climate." (Hollman, p.9)

Informants spoke of the need for houses to be large enough so they could entertain their friends at home. Women in Whitehorse were particularly concerned, and stated:

> "Housing affects our lifestyle - everyone is away from home a lot because there's no room to entertain people."
>
> "One reason we don't spend a lot of time at home when my husband is in Whitehorse is that the house is more of a concern. I can see the problems such as its lack of space."
>
> "The house has become noticeably smaller as the kids get older. We need more space for entertaining, ... more yard space and more space for tinkering."

In one of the Tumbler Ridge studies conducted by Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, the researchers point out that:

> "The long winters, harsh climate and lack of diverse recreational opportunities common to northern resource communities place greater than normal demands on the house as a shelter from the elements and as a support for domestic and leisure activities."
>
> (Thompson, Berwick & Pratt,
> 'Conceptual Plan, Tumbler
> Ridge, p.62)

It is obvious from our informants' comments that inadequate space in the home is a source of stress for women and their families in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Building homes with suitable play space for children and room for entertaining friends at home must be a primary consideration in future residential planning.

C. Type, quality and cost of housing:

Women spoke of the need for good quality, single family dwelling at a price they could afford. They outlined the negative consequences for the family, small businesses and community stability if such housing is not available. And women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse reported that their needs are not being met. According to one Whitehorse informant:

> "The houses are huge, elaborate and extravagant. Construction people build for a certain class up here ... It's certainly not the average income class. We'd like to live in a small, simple place without a lot of extras but there are just not houses like that available."

Fort Nelson women stated:

> "We need more single family dwellings."
>
> "There is a lack of moderately priced housing in Fort Nelson."
>
> "Housing is too expensive. We should have assisted home buying and renting programs."

The impact on business of the current lack of suitable housing was mentioned by several Fort Nelson informants. One woman said, "It's hard to hire people from out of town because there's no place for them to live." And another informant said:

> "A recent survey expects 600 people with permanent jobs not related to the pipeline will move in in the next while. Where are they going to live, let alone the pipeline people? Lack of housing is hampering business expansion. I can't get a business partner due to lack of housing in Fort Nelson."

A Whitehorse informant felt the housing situation had improved recently. She said, "my husband used to have to put up his men in hotels but now he has no trouble finding accommodation for them in the community. Eight years ago it was not unusual for teachers to live in people's basements for a place to stay."

The desire for a stable neighbourhood that had a feeling of permanence was shared by Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women. They talked of wanting to "fix up their homes and put down roots in the community." Fort Nelson women emphasized that workers hired from out of town should bring their families instead of coming to the town alone. They hoped that if workers brought their families it would contribute to the stability of the community:

> "The emphasis should be on family housing. If a man can get a job here and a house here he can bring his family and put down roots."

Family housing is generally preferred in northern towns according to Veit. She outlines the problems that may result if it is not available:

> "Despite the most elaborate combinations created by architects and planners, the single, detached, suburban-type home seems to be the most sought after type of housing among new town residents. This type of housing is often in short supply, forcing some workers to commute long distances or to live in nearby communities in inadequate housing."
>
> (Veit, 1978, p.IV-26)

The quality of housing construction will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, but it should be noted here that many women specified the need for housing built for northern conditions. A frequent complaint in both towns was the poor quality or lack of insulation: this resulted in high fuel costs as houses were difficult to heat and maintain at a comfortable temperature.

Fort Nelson informants stressed the need for solid basements in their homes:

> "We do need basements here for two main reasons. Being in the north you often need to buy in large quantities, so storage space is needed. And with ten month long winters, play space is needed for the kids."

Similar points about insulation and storage space are made by Linn and Stabler in their study:

> "The design of northern dwellings, however, generally reflects little or no effort to create structures especially suited to northern climatic conditions. Most dwellings do not have sheltered or protected entry ways. Often insufficient closet space was provided for winter clothing. Of those who complained of quality, one of the more frequently mentioned concerns was insufficient insulation which led to high fuel costs."
>
> (Linn and Stabler, p.II-12)

In summary, the comments of women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse clearly indicate that houses in their communities are not designed to meet climatic demands. Nor are the houses meeting the needs of women and their families. Although many of the concerns informants raised about housing have been detailed in numerous reports and studies, the housing problems still persist. Affordable housing built for northern conditions is in short supply in both communities. The section below describes the housing options available to women and their families in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

3.3.3 The Current Housing Situation

Housing options are limited in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. This section describes the current housing situation, and informants' comments on options they have considered. Many women would prefer to build their own home but the cost, relative unavailability of land and the poor quality of construction make it difficult.

The possibility of buying a home is restricted, reported our informants, primarily by the high cost and shortage of suitable homes. Rental accommodation, government housing and mobile home accommodation are satisfactory housing for some of the women, however, others find the high cost and low standard of such accommodation a problem.

A. Building a home:

For many women and their families, building their own home would appear to be the most effective way of meeting their housing needs. Not only would it provide them with the amount of space, location and type of house they desire, building a home would also provide a sense of stability and commitment to the community. Whitehorse women spoke at length about why they are building a home:

> "I'm anxious to move into the home we're building to have more privacy, a better location, and a place to call my own."
>
> "I'm glad we're building now because the way things are going, we wouldn't be able to afford a house a few years down the road with the escalating cost of houses."
>
> "My husband is building our new home from a precut package. We felt we would rather invest rent money and savings into a home of our own. I'm anxious to move into the new house because it's a good neighbourhood. We already know some of our neighbours because we were all building together."

Several Whitehorse women point out that building is a good investment:

> "Originally our idea was to build a house as an investment. Now it is more the idea of a home for ourselves, even though we realize it will be good resale value - you can never lose by investing in property up here."
>
> "In 1975 we built our own home in Riverdale. Since that time we have relocated three times in Riverdale - each time to a new home my husband built so we can sell the previous one."

The importance of owning land in the north is one reason why many families build or would like to build their own home. A letter to the Editor of the Fort Nelson News (November 22, 1978) explained that "owning our own land would give us the security we've always wanted and as a growing family we need this." An editorial in the Fort Nelson News of August 30, 1978 pointed out: "In order to say 'I belong here' you need to have land."

However, most of our informants have not yet been able to build their own home. High prices, difficulty in obtaining land, coupled with concern about the poor standard of home construction, have prevented them from doing so.

(i) Cost and availability of land

The high price of lots was commented on at length by Fort Nelson women:

> "The cost of land is too high. There is a new subdivision going in up the hill and the price on the lots is $18,000. With all the bush we have here there is no need for lots that expensive. More land should be made available at cost."
>
> "There are few lots available and they are very expensive. We bought a serviced lot and had to pay $400 extra to bring water in."

> "Can't we have land at decent prices? A young person can't even consider an acreage since the price of clearing, digging a well and septic tank are out of sight."

> "The prices of lots are far too high. The prices have been pushed up by Village Council and local real estate people."

The high price of lots has been a subject of considerable concern and discussion in Fort Nelson. Some Village officials held the provincial government responsible for the problems. At a Regional District meeting in Fort Nelson on June 26, 1979, 60 lots under development by the Peace River-Liard Regional District were discussed. Disagreement was expressed about how the price should be established. The Regional District maintained that the lots be sold at no profit, but the B.C. provincial government wanted the lots to be sold at market value so as not to present unfair competition to private enterprise. (Researcher's notes from the Regional District meeting, Fort Nelson, June 26, 1979)

An editorial in the Fort Nelson News, August 30, 1978 reported comments made by the Fort Nelson mayor at a Village council meeting on August 29, 1978: "We must not expect a lowering of land prices since the government is able to manipulate the price of land by creating a land shortage."

In a letter on file at the Fort Nelson Women's Centre dated October 20, 1978 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Fort Nelson real estate agent Ellis Ackerfeldt requested assistance from the minister in alleviating the present housing situation in Fort Nelson. She pointed out that:

> "It is virtually impossible to build even a small house in Fort Nelson for $45,000 unless

> the house is built entirely by the owners ... Just now there is only, as far as I know, one residential lot for sale in the whole of Fort Nelson, at a price of $19,500 for a 100' x 150' lot ... A basic 900 foot square house, with wooden basement and standard requirements on the cheapest available lot, would cost $48,000."

Several Fort Nelson informants suggested prices are high because so few lots are available:

> "The non-availability of Crown land and the real estate people have helped to push up prices."
>
> "Land should be made available to anyone instead of having 90 - 100 people at a land auction for only 12 lots. This is one of the reasons prices are so high."

One woman pointed out that "we have land galore, if governments at all levels would make it available." She believed speculation could be curbed by having a "two year limit on holding lots. That is, a person must build a home on the lot in two years or forfeit any money that's been put into it. And private re-sale of these empty lots should be prohibited."

Wally Braul, Regional District Planner for the Peace River-Liard Regional District explained that lots are made available from Crown land by the Regional District and the provincial government. An individual must apply for a lot to the Lands Branch. Land is released on the basis of demand according to Mr. Braul, and he pointed out that 38 lots were available in 1979 compared to the 20 lots available in 1978. (Interview with Wally Braul, Regional District Planner, Fort Nelson, June 1979) However, on December 6, 1978 the Fort Nelson News reported there were only three lots available for sale in Fort Nelson. The newspaper also reported earlier that when six lots were auctioned off in summer 1978, 80 people bid on them. This resulted in excessively high prices. (Fort Nelson News, July 19, 1979)

Several letters to the Fort Nelson News have commented that working class people cannot afford the price of land. One individual pointed out that working people cannot afford to take time off without pay to sit on the government building steps waiting to bid on the few lots available at auction. (Fort Nelson News, November 22, 1978)

Our informants' comments, local press reports and letters to the Editor of the Fort Nelson News show that there are not enough lots available in Fort Nelson to meet the demand. High prices are one result.

Whitehorse informants also spoke of the problems caused by a limited supply of land. Many informants criticized the method of selling lots. They reported that there are long line-ups of people waiting to bid on the few lots for sale. One woman outlined the system:

> "Our lot was purchased during a land sale when a number of surveyed lots went on sale by the territorial government. We stood in line along with everyone else to obtain the lot we wanted. The sale of house lots is very restricted in Whitehorse. They can be bought once or twice a year by standing in line for days - on a first come, first served basis- for a limited number of lots. This method of obtaining lots is an insult to a person's integrity."

Several other women were angry at the system of lot sales, and they described it as "repulsive" and "ridiculous". They stated it was also a deterrent to building one's own home. A Whitehorse woman told how she and her husband were eventually successful in obtaining a lot:

> "If anywhere, you'd expect to be able to get land up here, but it's a real 'animal act' to stand in the line-up. We stood in the line for the first batch of lots but didn't last the full week so we lost the chance of a lot. For the second sale we paid someone to stand in line for us, and were second in line and got one of the choice lots."

Another method of selling lots was tried in May 1979. A draw for recreational and cottage lots, offered for lease by the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs was organized. However, the draw was cancelled due to a "number of irregularities." (Northern Times, May 25, 1979) Over 1100 people applied for 117 lots. An editorial in the Northern Times of May 29, 1979 stated that: "The government did the right thing in cancelling the draw, if only because the number of applicants made it clear that the draw was poorly structured." The editorial suggested that the problems stemmed from an "attempt on the part of some applicants to take advantage of the system to achieve their own ends," including "making a quick buck because land is so hard to find in the Yukon."

In spring 1979, a new system of lot sales was tried in Whitehorse. It consisted of a "surprise radio announcement" system. Residents interested in purchasing available lots were told to listen to the radio at 7:15 a.m. each day for an announcement of where to register. The system was designed to avoid the problem of large and lengthy line-ups. Seventy people pre-registered for 55 available lots which will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. (Northern Times, May 28, 1979) This new system may be an improvement, however at least one problem persists: there are few lots available for sale.

According to the Yukon Real Estate Survey of March 1979, there were only 18 sales of residential lots recorded in the first quarter of March 1979. (Yukon Government Economic Research and Planning Unit, 1979) This is the lowest quarterly number recorded since the third quarter of 1976. The Northern Times reported that Municipal Affairs Minister Dan Lang commented:

> "I think we (the Yukon Territorial Government) are catching up with our land demand ... I do not feel the YTG is responsible for land shortages. One problem in obtaining block property transfers from the federal government has been the fact that YTG must exhibit a demonstrated need to the federal officials."
>
> (Northern Times, May 14 1979)

Apparently over 1100 people applying for 117 lots and people standing in line for up to a week at a time for residential lots does not demonstrate need.

It is evident that the high cost of lots and the difficulties involved in obtaining lots are two major obstacles that severely limit the possibility of a family building their own home. A third obstacle our informants identified is the low standard of construction.

(ii) Quality of construction

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse commented on the poor quality of home construction they have observed in their communities. A Fort Nelson woman said:

> "What we do have here is so poorly built. For example, a new apartment building that just opened in the fall is now condemned because everything is falling apart. The houses that have just gone up are much the same, but the people are stuck with them. Once they've signed the contract to purchase there's

> nothing they can do. There should be more pressure put on the contractor."

According to one Whitehorse informant:

> "It's important to have a reputable carpenter build the home to avoid disappointment ... A lot of people build their own home thinking it will be an adventure and more economical and they pay the price for it when it becomes a dragged-out chore and is poorly constructed. It is important for warmth and comfort that the homes are good."

Fort Nelson informants were very worried about low construction standards. One woman commented that houses are "built like butterboxes" and others cited wooden basements as a specific problem: "As for the wooden basements people are using, they won't stand up, literally. There's far too much muskeg for even cement basements. In a couple of years they are cracked and leaking."

Fort Nelson Building Inspector Cliff Prowse explained to researchers that the Village Council in Fort Nelson had contacted other municipalities for their opinion on wooden basements: "They don't like them but since wooden basements are National Code approved, and they've had no problems with them, they can't stop them." (Interview with Cliff Prowse, Building Inspector, Fort Nelson, June 1979)

Lack of building inspection was a concern of Fort Nelson women:

> "What goes with icicles hanging on brand new buildings? ... Where was the building inspector?"

> "You may as well have a tarpaper shack as these new things: it would be just as warm. Building inspection is insufficient. For example, one person with a new house has icicles eight inches wide and three feet long hanging on the house and the water froze four times in January. Where was the building inspector when that was being built?"

> "Higher standards are needed. And inspection from start to finish ... Houses are not designed for the area. They need better roofs and heavier insulation."

Many women saw the poor quality of construction as the result of low building standards and the absence of northern standards, lack of inspection, and poor construction practices by out-of-town builders.

> "Building standards should be higher but they are hard to enforce. Some buildings built by out-of-towners are falling apart in their first year."
>
> "Housing needs to be better ... more attention to fire exits and building codes."
>
> "There has to be more control on warranties on buildings. They are slapped together haphazardly. It seems that one day there's nothing, the next day a house. With prefabs there are lots of problems, too - leaky roofs and so on. The weather is too severe for them."
>
> "One brand new house in the East Sub had water in the basement. The houses are thrown up too fast, they are cold, leaky, and it's being done by outside developers. We need better building inspection, we don't need more places like these new ones."
>
> "Keep CMHC out! They have such weird standards they must have used the Florida Everglades as a model ... There needs to be more stringent control on out-of-town builders. A contractor ran a six inch sewer line to the road to find that the village has a four inch line. The Village said go ahead and put a restrictor on it instead of making the contractor tear up the line. A few months later came blockage and flooding - an awful mess. The local contractors know about these things."

One informant reported hearing some builders laughing at local standards: "One said why should we do it right if anything passes, and another said that building inspection is a joke here."

Our informants' concerns are not reflected in the National Building Code which is the guide for building standards in Fort Nelson. The Village Building Inspector, Mr. Prowse has stated that inspections of buildings are carried out as required by the National Building Code, and that there are no northern building standards. The new National Building Code will be published in 1980 with the only basic revision in the standards being a change to metric measurement. (Interview, Cliff Prowse, Fort Nelson Building Inspector, June 1979)

However, press reports of public meetings and briefs to the Fort Nelson Village Council indicate that our informants' concerns are widespread among members of the community. For example, the Fort Nelson News of July 19, 1978 included coverage of a council meeting where a citizen stated he had seen irregularities in construction, consisting of basements built without concrete footings and cement for a foundation being poured into mud. In addition, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) brief to the Fort Nelson Village Council stated:

> "The most dismal aspect of purchasing a new home in Fort Nelson would be the quality of construction. We feel a large percentage of the new homes built in Fort Nelson would be considered speculative building. Examples of this construction practice are metal chimneys and fireplaces, chipboard and roof sheeting, chipboard siding, narrow cupboards, low grades of lumber of patio railing and a lack of landfill and no landscaping."
>
> (Calander, et al, 1979)

Similar concerns about the low standard and poor quality of home construction were raised by our Whitehorse informants:

> "Homes have poor insulation and people get away with it. The standards are there but they are not enforced."
>
> "There are a lot of poorly constructed homes thrown together by get-rich contractors - lots of people get ripped off when they buy homes here."

The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Manager in Whitehorse, Dave Kingsley, said there are really no special housing standards for the north. However, he said CMHC standards do require an increased standard of insulation in areas such as Whitehorse where there is partial or discontinuous permafrost. He also commented on wooden basements, saying, "I think they're excellent ... They're pressure-treated and installed according to manufacturers' regulations." As CMHC gives mortgages to new homes that have these wooden basements, their life expectancy "must be equal to cement" basements. (Interview with Dave Kingsley, CMHC Manager, Whitehorse, June 1979)

However, the Whitehorse Housing Authority Manager, Stu Muir, said he is "concerned with the quality of construction." He explained that previously most tenders for building were let to outside contractors from Edmonton and Calgary: they built the first 43 Whitehorse Housing Authority (W.H.A.) units in 1972. Contractors are responsible for their work for one year after construction. Unfortunately, he said, "contractors left plywood out in the winter, and now we have to re-do it all." To overcome the poor quality of construction, the W.H.A. is involved in "upgrading housing through maintenance programs." A local contractor has now built units for the W.H.A. and the results are more satisfactory. When asked why the units were better, Mr. Muir replied, "Why? Because they have to live here." (Interview with Stu Muir, W.H.A. Manager, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Opinion about the quality of home construction differed among the various officials. The National Building Code which provides guidelines for housing officials does not recognize northern realities. For our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, the problem of low quality construction is a reality they face daily. The concerns they have raised - including improved inspection practices and higher building standards to reflect northern conditions - require responsible action by officials in the housing industry.

B. Buying a Home:

Many of the factors that impinge on those people who are considering building a home also affect those people who are considering buying a home. The quality of home construction is a serious consideration, and the cost and availability of land clearly have a bearing on the cost and type of houses that are available for sale.

High house prices are a problem women in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse identified. Whitehorse, unlike Fort Nelson, does not have a housing shortage but does lack average-sized, family oriented homes at a price people feel is within their reach.

In Fort Nelson the primary concern of those informants who talked about buying a home was cost:

> "We're thinking about buying a house but it's too expensive."
>
> "It's too expensive to buy and too expensive to rent."
>
> "It was thought at one point that if new housing went up, the prices would go down. But that was a thought and nothing else. The prices have risen since. There is a lack of moderately priced housing."

A real estate agent with Liard Agencies Ltd., Mr. G. Dedels, provided the following figures which show the price range of a three bedroom house with basement has increased dramatically over the past six years:

Year	Price range
1973 - 1974	$35,000 - $49,000
1975 - 1977	$55,000 - $69,000
1978 - 1979	$69,000 - $89,000

Prices varied according to the location in the community. According to Mr. Dedels a house "on the hill", a more sought after area of town, would cost $10,000 to $15,000 more than a similar house in other areas of Fort Nelson. (Information from G. Dedels, Liard Agencies Ltd., Fort Nelson, 1979)

Another major concern voiced by many of our informants is the "drastic housing shortage". One informant hoped "maybe the new subdividion will help the housing shortage." According to Hollman, "housing (in Fort Nelson) is in short supply and the prices are high." This is caused by the boom period the area is undergoing as a result of the developments in the forest industry, transportation and increased activities in the oil/gas fields. Hollman emphasized in his report, entitled 'Requirements for Future Housing in Fort Nelson' which was submitted to the Village Council that future planning for housing needs must be well organized: "a comprehensive approach to the housing situation - anticipating events, i.e. housing demand, and planning for it in advance." (Hollman, p.1)

The 'IWA Brief on Housing' submitted to the Village of Fort Nelson points out that "the buying of a house is not so much what you want or need, or the area you would prefer to reside in; it is a matter of what is available." They add that "of course, a person must consider price" and note that in Fort Nelson "the prices appear to be considerably higher even in comparison to some areas of the province that have reputations as high cost housing areas." (Calander et al, p.6). The high prices and the housing shortage effectively eliminate the possibility of buying a house for many Fort Nelson women and their families.

In contrast to the housing shortage in Fort Nelson, Whitehorse informants reported that there is "an overabundance of houses" in Whitehorse. One woman said there were seven houses for sale just on her block. Another informant mentioned she and her family had considered buying a home but felt they "would not get their money out of their trailer because there are so many houses for sale."

A real estate agent with Aurora Realty in Whitehorse suggested there was a "summer disease" in Whitehorse that creates a situation where "every other house on your street is for sale. Yet many of these sellers have no intention of selling ... they are just wondering what price they could get", commented the agent. (Interview with Aurora Realty Agent, Whitehorse, June, 1979)

It became apparent in the interviews conducted in Whitehorse that many women wished to own their homes. They want the security and sense of stability owning a home provides. Their comments indicate that they will persevere and save and adjust to less than perfect conditions in order to own their own home. One woman described arriving in Whitehorse and searching for a house to buy, and finding them all too expensive. She and her family rented a house but worried that "we could be asked to move at any time on 30 days notice." They continued to search for a house to buy, and in 1975 purchased a two bedroom bungalow on a corner lot. "The house is small for five children but we've renovated the basement and we make dc," she said.

Another woman said she and her family would like to have a home of their own so they could "have more privacy and space and do what we want to it." However, at present they cannot find a house to buy "because either they're asking too much, or it's not what we want, so we'll put up with our present housing."

"We've put a lot of work and time into this house and it is ours" affirmed one Whitehorse informant. This was a view many women shared. They will accept less than fully satisfactory accommodation but take pride in renovating it to make a good home - their own home. However, as much as women and their families may wish to own a home and be willing to renovate, high prices often prevent them from buying a house:

> "I would like us to have a home of our own, and we're presently saving for one, but every year the prices go up so much. We still don't have enough for a decent downpayment. House prices have really increased in the past two years."
>
> "It's too bloody expensive - way out of line. I don't know how people do it - the mortgages have to be $600 - $800 a month and then there's utilities and food. There are a lot of people up here with good salaries who say they have a hard time of it. There's an incredible money pressure up here. It's hard on the nuclear family - the woman has to work but there are no special facilities or services for children. We have a bit of anxiety about waiting for two more years to buy a house - the price may be way out of reach. But maybe a miracle will happen and the prices will drop."

According to the Yukon Real Estate Survey, the average price of a house in December, 1978 in Whitehorse was $67,627. This is an increase of 26 per cent from December, 1977 (Yukon Government, Economic Research and Planning Unit, Real Estate Survey, December, 1978, p.4). From January to March 1979, average house prices declined by 4 per cent. However, in March 1979 the average house price in Whitehorse was estimated at almost $65,000 -

still 18 per cent higher than in March 1978 when the average price was $55,274. The survey also points out that:

> "In the City of Whitehorse during the fourth quarter of 1978, the total value of transaction established a new record, at $14.4 million. The increased activity in Whitehorse was brought about mainly by greater housing and commercial property sales ... The real estate market in Whitehorse during 1978 reflected the more general characteristics of the Yukon as a whole with fewer transactions, but a much higher total value ... During 1978 the total value of Whitehorse real estate transactions was $46.5 million; $9.8 million or 26.6 per cent higher than the previous year."
>
> (Yukon Government,
> Economic Research and
> Planning Unit, Yukon
> Real Estate Survey,
> December, 1978, p.2)

Although the real estate market in Whitehorse is obviously healthy, many of our informants said there is a shortage of the type of housing they require - "average, cheaper homes." One woman said "I don't understand how people can afford to pay the mortgages and heat the big houses that are going up." "Housing is difficult to find in Whitehorse for lower-middle income people", commented another.

The Aurora Realty agent offered an explanation of why many of the houses being built in Whitehorse are large, expensive and unsuited to the northern climate. She cited the case of the Canadian National Telecommunications company which moved its offices and employees from Edmonton to Whitehorse. The newcomers were purchasing houses, and they "were buying what there were used to - the majority bought in Riverdale" where houses are generally larger (and more expensive). She felt that "houses of log construction - a northern type of housing" were discouraged because "the southern-type frame house is cheaper to build, cheaper for the contractor."

It appears that the housing industry in Whitehorse is not taking residents' needs and concerns into account with the result that women and their families experience difficulty in finding a suitable house at a price they can afford. The alternative for those who cannot afford to buy a house is rental accommodation and trailers.

C. Rental Accommodation:

In Fort Nelson the most common form of rental accommodation available is apartments, and Fort Nelson informants were very concerned about the high rents charged. Whitehorse women, on the other hand, were concerned with the low standard of rental accommodation and the need for rent control as well as with rental prices.

"Apartments were basically the only available form of housing for 1978 and will also be for 1979," according to the Fort Nelson village planner. (Hollman, p.6) Although rental accommodation is preferred by some residents, many of our informants were frustrated: renting is a necessity as building a home is extremely costly, and homes available for sale at an affordable price are few and far between. As one single parent commented, "I'd like to own but it's too expensive." Another informant felt "given the poor quality and high prices of houses for sale, it's better to rent right now." Yet many informants found Fort Nelson rents very high:

> "A one bedroom apartment is $375, not including utilities. The way prices are rising there's no way people can afford it."
>
> "I pay $395 for a one-bedroom apartment. Rents are out of line."

"I can't afford to buy and I can't afford to rent."

The School district 81 (Fort Nelson) 'Brief on Housing' records Fort Nelson rents (usually exclusive of utilities) at the levels listed below:

	1979	1978	1977	1976
Apartments	$375-435/mo	$270-340/mo	$221-250/mo	$110-221/mo
Mobile homes	$350-500/mo	$355/mo	-	-
Houses	$375-550/mo	$350/mo	$177-145/mo	$155-250/mo

The 'Brief on Housing' was submitted to the CMHC. It urges the CMHC to furnish additional funds to enable contractors to provide the housing that is needed in Fort Nelson at a reasonable cost, that is, at prices within the reach of the average wage earner. (School District 81, Brief on Housing, 1979, p) The attached chart, from the International Woodworkers of America Brief to the Village of Fort Nelson, compares rents in Fort Nelson with rents in Prince George, Whitehorse, Houston, Watson Lake and the province of Alberta. In most cases rents in Fort Nelson are the highest.

Not only are rents high in Fort Nelson - rental accommodation is extremely difficult to find. The vacancy rate of rental accommodation in the Fort Nelson area has been estimated at zero by the IWA 'Brief', the Fort Nelson News, and at least one alderman. It is interesting to note that there was a severe rental accommodation shortage in Fairbanks, Alaska during the construction of the Alaska pipeline. The Fairbanks vacancy rate was .6 per cent in the mid 1970s; and a vacancy rate of less

Type of Housing	Prince George	Whitehorse	Province of Alberta	Houston	Watson Lake	Fort Nelson
Bachelor Suite	$85-120	$250	$50-350	$186	$225	Appear to be none
1 bedroom	$145-175	$300	$102-324	$200	$276	$305-375
2 bedroom	$197-285	$355	$145-384	$221	$338	$340-425
3 bedroom	$210-275 (town house)	$372	$155-419	$250-300 (town house)	$350	$325* (town house)
4 bedroom	$222	$350	$247-462	$330 (town house)	-	None

* We understand that there is a Government subsidy of $100 per month.

from Brief Submitted to Village of Fort Nelson
re Apartments and Housing,
IWA, Local 1-24 and
IWA Tackama Housing Committee

than 3 per cent is defined by the state of Alaska as a housing emergency. (Dixon, p.110)

The IWA contends that the vacancy rate in Fort Nelson affects the prices charged for rental accommodation:

> "We feel that with a zero vacancy rate - a waiting list - the free market is replaced with a monopoly where the price is set based on what the market will bear and more."
>
> (Calander et al, p.6)

Discrimination by landlords or agents in favour of married persons may also be a result of the rental accommodation shortage (Calendar et al, p.3) In addition, the housing shortage affects employment according to our informants and other members of the community. "It's hard to hire out-of-town people since there's no place for them to live" commented one informant. Audrey Greer, the branch manager of the Canada Employment Centre, said they "can't fill job vacancies for one reason only - no accommodation." (Fort Nelson News, June 13, 1979).

In December 1978, the Fort Nelson News reported many people were living in tents; 25 people were living in a double-width trailer; 20 in another trailer; and, others were sleeping in the firehall. (Fort Nelson News, December 6, 1978). In June 1978, the Outreach Office in Fort Nelson found that 10 out of 17 people registered at the Canada Employment Centre were sleeping in cars or tents; the others were sleeping in vacant buildings or on floors in other residents' homes.

Motel units have been suggested as a possible solution to the housing shortage. While perhaps useful in the short term, the rates at motels are such that any person arriving in Fort Nelson in search of work could not afford to stay in a motel for any length of time. In addition, the manager of the Fort Nelson Motor Hotel said there were no vacancies in Fort Nelson motels and hotels in summer or winter. He said gas explorations crews in winter and tour buses on the Alaska Highway in summer keep his motel full all year round, and that the situation is similar at the six other hotels and motels in Fort Nelson. (Fort Nelson News, February 28, 1979).

The IWA Brief maintains that local motel and hotel owners have capitalized on the housing shortage by charging excessively high rates: companies will pay whatever price necessary to house their temporary workers. (Calendar et al, p.3)

Although motels and hotels are not an effective solution to the housing shortage, they do provide emergency accommodation: when they are full the situation becomes desperate. One Fort Nelson informant told our researchers "A couple hit town a few weeks ago at 45 degrees below zero and there wasn't a motel room in the town. What do you do with them?" She sent them to the Catholic Church where they slept in the church's thrift shop section.

Suggestions to resolve the housing crisis included: "Make a list of private homes to take the overflow from the motels and the hotels, especially in the winter." And set up "a hostel for women and families, and also one for single men."

Clearly, emergency measures of some kind are required to house temporary workers now and the need will be greater during construction of the Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline. The overall housing problem in Fort Nelson, however, is aggravated by the high rents which even make rented apartments an unattainable housing alternative.

Those Whitehorse informants who live in rental accommodation did so for a variety of reasons. Some said they rent because they plan to buy a house eventually but cannot obtain a mortgage. Others cannot afford the down-payment on a house. Some women rent because they "haven't made definite plans for the future and don't want to be tied down." One woman said she and her family "are in a dilemma because my husband is out of town at least six months of the year.The family goes along with him so it's not worth our while to buy a house."

The primary concern of these women is the low standard of their rental accommodation, a problem that is compounded by difficulties in getting landlords to do repairs or maintenance. One woman talked of living with her children in an apartment:

> "The accommodation is crowded for three people especially since the kids are older - they really need separate bedrooms now so the kids take turns sleeping on the couch. I just can't afford the rent for a three bedroom place. There is no one around for repairs and maintenance..."

Several informants spoke of problems in getting repairs and maintenance for their apartments: "I've been burned by a faulty stove, disturbed by other tenants and the landlord has been unresponsive." Informants also spoke of the low building standards they observed, and suggested there should be inspections of rental housing.

A coroner's jury in Whitehorse also recommended there be regular inspections of rental accommodation. This recommendation arose from the inquest into the death of a Whitehorse man who died of carbon monoxide poisoning in his apartment in February 1979. The source of the carbon monoxide appeared to be improper combustion in the wood-oil stove in the apartment. The Northern Times, in reporting the jury's recommendation that inspections of rental accommodation be instituted, commented "it may be ignored for lack of a formal way of ensuring it is carried out." The newspaper noted that only motels and hotels are inspected regularly. (Northern Times, June 28th, 1979)

Regular inspection of all rental accommodation could be effective in identifying needed improvements and repairs. The knowledge that housing would be inspected on a routine basis could induce contractors to build to satisfactory standards, provided, of course, there is some way the body in charge of such inspections could ensure that the recommended repairs would be carried out.

Whitehorse informants, like Fort Nelson informants, found that rents were high. One single woman presently sharing an apartment, felt it would be difficult for her to maintain her own apartment unless she earned $2000 a month. According to one informant, sharing an apartment meant the rent was "about the same as anywhere else." The cost of renting appeared reasonable in comparison to Yellowknife to one informant, while one woman said she was paying $100 more than she would for a similar apartment in Vancouver. Rents in Whitehorse have increased by a range of 5 to 11.8 per cent from June 1978 to June 1979 in Whitehorse depending on type and location of apartment. (Government of Yukon, Yukon Rent Survey, June 1979, pp. 5,6)

Several Whitehorse informants thought a system of rent control would be a remedy for the low standards and high rents. "Quality, price and availability of apartments are terrible" said one informant, and "people put up with the fact that there's no rent control." She cited, as an example of the need for rent control, a friend's landlord who said he would only fix the leaks in the roof if the tenants understood the rent would be raised.

Stories of exorbitant rent increases in Fairbanks, Alaska abounded during the Alyeska pipeline construction in the mid 1970s. This led the State Commission of Commerce to conduct public hearings about rents. A Rent Review Board was established, and according to Dixon:

> "The Rent Review Board served as a deterrent against further outrageous rent increases. Actions of the Board were not retroactive however and the price of housing did not decline until after the Board was established. Moreover, the Board had no control over the prices of new housing in the rental market. The Rent Review Board might have served to relieve the personal crisis which occurred when a tenant was the victim of rent gouging and had no other housing alternatives, but it did not solve the community crisis with regard to the housing shortage."
>
> (Dixon,pp.124-126)

Given the Fairbanks experience it appears that rent control could prove helpful in Whitehorse, especially if the body in charge of rent control also has authority over rents in new rental housing.

Even if rent control is instituted, one fundamental difficulty still remains - finding an apartment to rent. Many informants spoke of the difficulty they had in obtaining an apartment. Several said the way to find a place is through friends. Many women who move to Whitehorse first live at the 4th Avenue Residence which is said to be the most reasonably priced accommodation available. Alternatively, women may live at a motel for weeks or months whild seeking an apartment, trailer or house to rent or buy.

Diane Brown, manager of the 4th Avenue Residence, explained that the residence was built because of the shortage of housing. Rates vary from $170 mo. for a single room, $135/mo. per person for a double room, to $110/mo. per person for a triple room.

> "The 4th Avenue Residence initially operated as a YWCA with accommodation strictly for women. Now both men and women live there. They house mostly single people, men whose families are down south while they are working, and on occasion they have rented whole clusters of rooms to single parents. The length of stay varies from one to three months, and many people in White-

horse have lived there at one time or another."

(Interview with Diane
Brown, Manager, 4th
Avenue Residence,
Whitehorse, June 1979)

Single parents may find it particularly difficult to rent accommodation in Whitehorse. Whitehorse Housing Authority manager Stu Muir confirmed that single mothers do have "a tremendous problem since private landlords won't rent to them." In one 18-unit WHA apartment block, 16 of the units are occupied by single mothers and their children. Muir said that many of the women who come to the WHA in search of housing are those with a "lower income"; "from broken homes"; or often a woman "desperately seeking to get out of her present situation." (Interview with Stu Muir, WHA manager, Whitehorse, June, 1979).

Larry Turner, manager of the Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) stated the YHC's biggest need is for two bedroom accommodation as single parents with a child cannot find suitable accommodation at a price they can afford. YHC has few two bedroom units to offer. (Interview with Larry Turner, YHC manager, Whitehorse, June 1979).

It is clear that many women who, through choice or necessity, live in rental accommodation in Whitehorse face serious difficulties including a low standard of accommodation, high rents, and a general shortage of suitable apartments.

D. Government Housing:

Some of our Whitehorse informants live in federal government subsidized housing provided to workers hired from outside the Yukon. They commented on the advantages and disadvantages of such housing. Many complained that the apartments were not sufficiently spacious, and single people appeared to have particular difficulty in finding a large enough apartment:

> "Married couples have no problems getting reasonably spacious government housing, but single people don't get it. I pay $140 for a bachelor apartment that meets my basic needs, but I think I'll move to a larger place even if it isn't government subsidized."

Some informants who live with a partner had more positive comments about the advantages of their government housing. One informant, who shares a three bedroom duplex with her husband said:

> "It's perfect. It's big, close to work and curling, cheap rent, fairly quiet, and in a good neighbourhood. It's maintenance free and good for having friends over because it's so big."

However, one woman said that when her husband is not working out of town and both of them are home, the lack of space is more apparent. She believes "a common reason for moving is for more room for family."

Many informants with children found government housing too small and poorly designed for their needs:

> "It was too small for a family; cold, poorly constructed and poorly designed."

> "The house is small for our needs - especially the kitchen. It bothers me that I can't make the house my own, paint, wallpaper and things like that."

Women also expressed concern about the lack of privacy, the location of their homes and the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which they lived:

> "It's in the worst area in the city - Takhini - and all the duplexes are the same, all the neighbours are government people and we don't like sharing the building."

One informant said she is anxious to move into their own home they are building in a new subdivision. In speaking of the government housing in which she and her family presently live she commented:

> "It will do for now. We have a lot of room, but I sure wouldn't like the thought of living here for too long. Takhini is not the best location in the world; all the houses are the same, government duplexes. It's like living in a shoebox."

One informant was more positive about her government housing and its location: "At first I thought the houses were the ugliest things I'd ever seen on the outside," but "they're okay inside, in fact they more than meet our needs. Our duplex is one of 50 exactly the same," she commented, "and it gives me something in common with my neighbours." For her, government housing is a "good deal" since they can't afford to buy a house and she'd "hate to live in an apartment."

Several informants who lived in federal government housing were pleased with the fact that maintenance was the responsibility of the government and was generally promptly undertaken. In addition, utilities were subsidized which cut a family's living expenses considerably. However, informants who lived in Yukon territorial government housing, where utilities are not subsidized, were not so happy: "The house is comfortable but it doesn't let in much light, poor windows. The utilities are expensive because the house is so large and poorly built for these conditions."

Government housing clearly meets the needs of some Whitehorse residents, particularly couples. Women with children, however, and single women find government housing less suitable. Obviously government housing is, in any case, an option for only a limited number of people. Only those who are employed by the federal or territorial government or whose partner is employed by the federal or territorial government are eligible to live in government housing.

E. Mobile Homes:

Mobile homes, usually referred to as "trailers" by our informants, are often proposed as a solution to housing shortages, particularly in northern communities where the population of a town may fluctuate a great deal through the effects of a development project such as a pipeline or gas/oil exploration. Despite some conveniences, many of our informants were not happy with trailers.

Fort Nelson women identified small lot size, the lack of landscaping in trailer courts, and high rents for trailers as the major problems. Whitehorse informants had similar concerns. One Whitehorse woman who lives with her husband in a trailer they have bought noted there is no sense of community because the accommodation is temporary for many people. She said, "I hate living in a trailer, it's too small and confining. You feel like you're living in a hallway. The place is too stereotyped and difficult to modify."

Several Fort Nelson informants thought trailer accommodation was advantageous for some people: "It's good for young couples just starting out." A definite advantage of trailers is their relatively low cost compared to other forms of housing. Michael Audain, in the report, 'Mobile Homes: Problems and Prospects' notes:

> "As far as income is concerned, mobile homes do certainly appear to serve the housing requirements of low-wage earners to a much greater extent than those of other British Columbians ... They are predominantly occupied by young families and retired people."
>
> (Audain, p.11)

In addition, trailers are advantageous to people who may not be planning to stay permanently in a community:

> "The relative ease of buying and disposing of the unit, thereby avoiding a substantial commitment to any one neighbourhood or community as might be anticipated in the purchase of a conventional dewelling, is seen as one of the major reasons for purchasing a mobile home."
>
> (Audain, p.12)

Although the temporary nature of trailer homes is an advantage for some people, it contributes to community instability. This was identified as a problem by many of our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. People were not committed to the community they felt, both because of the nature of a trailer itself and because of the unattractiveness of the trailer courts:

> "I'm appalled at the lack of appeal in trailer courts - no landscaping or playgrounds."
>
> "I'd like to see nice big lots so trailer owners can put down roots."

One Fort Nelson informant suggested "the village should encourage trailer parks owned by trailer makers. At first these could be regular trailer parks, then later sell every second one to make a trailer subdivision. This would then take care of the need for housing in the short term and still be a nice place to live.

The high rent asked for trailers was a problem identified by Fort Nelson women. According to one informant who owns a trailer and rents it out, rents are expensive and demand is high. She advertised her trailer vacancy in only two radio advertisements and received over 60 enquiries. Fort Nelson women reported paying rents as high as $550/month to $650/month for a trailer, not inclusive of utilities.

According to the'Proceedings of the Conference on Northern Industrial Towns, 1974', "it would appear that the mobile home is destined to play a leading role in many industrial towns where housing is scarce, because of the lower cost, the smaller possible lot and hence lower service cost, and the urgency for establishing some form of housing quickly." ('Proceedings of the Conference on Northern Industrial Towns', p.15)

Trailers may appear to be a solution to the housing shortage in Fort Nelson. However, Dixon reported that trailers were ultimately not a solution to the housing situation in Fairbanks during the construction of the Alyeska pipeline:

> "For the community as a whole, the only viable solution to the housing problem appeared to be mobile home and modular units ... From April 1974 when pipeline construction was beginning, to July 1976, the number of mobile homes in Fairbanks' North Star Borough increased from 2,237 to 3,482. During that period mobile homes comprised an estimated 49 per cent of the new housing units in Fairbanks. Instead of realizing the dreams of 'broad streets, row upon row of attractive homes,' the pipeline brought row upon row of mobile homes crammed close together to minimize the cost of providing utilities to the lots in the mobile home courts."
>
> (Dixon, p.128)

Given our informants' comments about the disadvantages of trailers and the negative experience in Fairbanks, it would be unwise to consider mobile home accommodation as anything more than a partial and limited contribution to solving the housing problems in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

3.4 SUMMARY - HOUSING NEEDS

Housing and the design of the community profoundly affect women's lives. Women in northern communities spend a large proportion of their time in their home and neighbourhood. Their work of maintaining the household and caring for children is there. The extreme winter weather and the lack of accessible recreational opportunities underline the importance of the home and neighbourhood as a support for domestic and leisure activities. The isolation of northern communities makes community stability particularly important.

Sue Langin's study on women and resource development contends that unsuitable housing and a lack of community stability, especially in communities that are experiencing change and development, can result in "severe socio-pyschological problems which are manifested in the form of anomie, withdrawal, apathy, isolation, powerlessness, frustration, resentment, unfulfilled expectations, alienation and monotony." (Langin, p.4) To regard these as personal problems would be inaccurate. As Langin points out, they are manifestations of social and economic issues.

Our informants described the depression, loneliness or "cabin-fever" that often result from the isolation, climate, and community instability experienced in northern communities (see also Chapter 2, Women in Northern Communities). Women's physical environment in Fort Nelson and

Whitehorse - the design of their community and housing - contribute to these problems.

Inadequate community planning has resulted in a lack of integration of Whitehorse subdivisions which makes it more difficult for residents to have a sense of community stability. In addition, inadequate planning is responsible for community services such as schools, shopping, and recreation facilities being located too far away from many residential areas in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Access to services is also inhibited by the poor condition of roads and sidewalks and by the need for improvements in street lighting, traffic lights and maintenance of crosswalks. The absence of a public transportation system in Fort Nelson further restricts access to services. Furthermore, unsatisfactory servicing and maintenance of the communities makes some areas hazardous for pedestrians. Litter and poorly maintained roads and streets detract from pride in the community and contribute to a sense of community instability.

The housing situation in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse does not meet the needs of women or their families. They need affordable housing built for northern conditions and in congruence to the environment. Houses must be well insulated and have indoor play space for children and room for entertaining. Since community services are often located outside existing residential areas, women seek housing closer to services.

Many women would prefer to build their own home, as a method of meeting their housing needs and providing a sense of stability. However, there are few lots available on which to build in either Fort Nelson or Whitehorse. Government does not see the need or demand for land as sufficient reason to make more land available for sale. The limited amount of land for sale results in high prices for lots. Different levels of government in British Columbia argue about the price of land with the residents suffering the consequences. The Regional District government suggests lots should be sold at no profit to meet residents' demand for affordable land; the provincial government says this practice would present unfair competition to private enterprise. Fort Nelson realtors, however, have requested help from the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs to deal with housing problems, apparently to no avail. In Whitehorse, several systems of selling lots have been tried. There are long line-ups and instances of over 1,100 people applying for 117 lots. However, the federal and Yukon territorial governments apparently do not consider the demand or need to be great enough to make more land available.

Buying or renting accommodation to meet housing needs presents problems of low construction standards and high costs. The National Building Code does not include special northern standards. Affordable homes built for northern conditions are in short supply, in part, because it is less expensive for contractors to build southern type frame houses. Contractors are encouraged in this practice by the influx of workers from the south, who are unaware of northern conditions and look to buy or rent the kind of homes they were used to in the south. The lack of building inspection aggravates the problems created by inadequate standards.

Apartment rents are high in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. In Whitehorse, apartments are hard to find especially for single women or people on a fixed income. In Fort Nelson the vacancy rate for rental accommodation is zero - a housing emergency.

Government housing is satisfactory for some but it is, of course, limited to government employees. Many government employees are required for only temporary work and this adds to a sense of community instability for their neighbours. Mobile homes are located on small lots and rents are high. Trailers are generally inadequate as a long-term residence, further adding to community instability.

Inadequate town planning and housing that does not meet the needs of women and their families are real and immediate problems. Many informants expect the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline will aggravate the problems. Even before construction has begun, the pipeline is having a negative effect. "House prices sky-rocketed a year ago when pipeline talk was so loud," said one Whitehorse woman. Fort Nelson women reported that more workers are coming to town seeking work on the pipeline. This is the beginning of an extra demand for housing in a town that is already experiencing a housing crisis. Not only is planning for the future essential; immediate measures to ease the current housing problems are required.

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse have affirmed their need for a stable community that is a hometown for themselves and their families. If the Alaska Highway gas pipeline is to be constructed to benefit, not impair, the lives of the residents of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, the priorities women have identified of suitable, reasonably priced housing and improved community design and servicing must be central planning considerations.

4.0 WOMEN AND THEIR WORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters of this report have given women's perspective on life in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Women have described why theylive in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse and what they like and dislike in their living situation. Their views on community services, such as education, medical, social and transportation services, and on housing have been reported. Having described the women's physical environment, this chapter will deal with the work women do in that environment, both inside and outside the home.

The chapter is divided into three sections covering women's work in the home, work for wages and voluntary work. Such a presentation ensures a complete account of all the work undertaken by women, including the largely unpaid work of maintaining self and family in the community.

Although there is often disagreement about the benefits and disadvantages of major developments such as the Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline, most people are aware of the considerable impact such a project has on commerce and the environment. What is not recognized by many people is the effect the construction of a pipeline may have on women and their families who live in nearby towns and communities. Through the description of women's work the link that exists between the public and private worlds, between the home and the community at large, will be made clear in this chapter. The impact of the pipeline on women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse will thus be made evident.

4.2 WOMEN'S WORK IN THE HOME

This section on women's work in the home provides information on our informants' home and family maintenance in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Household maintenance includes all aspects of work in the home and the purchase of goods and services. Family maintenance includes all aspects of the provision of care for partners and children.

As Smith points out, "The production of the home as an actual material state of affairs is the direct responsibility of women." (Smith, 1973, p.16) Characteristic features of housework in modern industrialized society are "its exclusive allocation to women, its association with economic dependence, its status as non-work and its priority over other roles for women." (Oakley, p.1) In other words, housework is women's work and the workplace is the private domestic sphere of the home.

Women's work in the home may be defined as the total of all useful activities that provide the goods and services to enable the family to function as a family. Such activities encompass:

> "(a) food preparation; regular meals, special meals, freezing and other such activities; after-meal cleanup
>
> (b) care of family members: children, persons who are ill, handicapped or elderly
>
> (c) regular and seasonal maintenance of the house, yard and car
>
> (d) care of clothing: washing, ironing, cleaning, sewing and mending
>
> (e) shopping, household management and maintenance of accounts."
>
> (Proulx, p.20)

Jacobson contends that where women do not participate in the public world, traditionally the man's world, their work is seen as being inconsequential and generally goes unrecognized. As a result, there is no accounting for "the considerable importance of the support system that women are providing for work in the public world." (Jacobson, 1978, p.5) Proulx adds that "their invisible and unpaid work ensures the maintenance and renewal of the current labour force at the same time that it produces the next generation of workers." (Proulx, p.5)

It is important to clarify that women's work in the home involves more than actual physical labour. Housework has no time limit: it is an ever present responsibility every day of the year, at all times of the day and evening. There are additional responsibilities if there are children involved.

The importance of a woman's work to herself, her family and her community has, generally speaking, been ignored and unrecognized by those persons interested in improving the quality of life in our society. In the Centre for Settlement Studies research report entitled 'Adequacy of Selected Goods and Services as Evaluated by Homemakers in a Resource Frontier Community' (1974), the authors point out that when "for one or many reasons homemakers are dissatisfied with life in a community, reactions may occur which can result in attitudes ranging from open discontent to suppressed unhappiness. These negative feelings can damage relationships within the family as well as between the family and other members and institutions in the community." (Bayclay, Baxter et al, p.2)

This phenomenon is sometimes referred to and dismissed as the "bored housewife" syndrome. Unfortunately, a large part of the problem lies in that very perspective. As the Council on Rural Development's 'Rural Women's Study' points out:

> "The popular practice of distinguishing between 'real work' and 'housework' not only discriminates against homemakers but it has also given rise to a distorted impression of the relationship between the family and the community ... No effort has been made to consider the impact of the homemaker beyond the context of family life."
>
> (Council on Rural Development, p.4)

The section below on household maintenance provides descriptions by Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women of their work as homemakers in developing northern communities. Their descriptions make clear the link between the world of the home and family and the world of development and commerce.

4.2.1 Household Maintenance

A. Shopping:

Shopping is an activity crucial to the maintenance of all households. However, the tasks involved in providing for the household are generally taken for granted and are seldom considered or discussed as work.

Our informants spoke of the problems of shopping for food, clothing and other household items, with special emphasis on food shopping. They were concerned about cost, quality, availability, facilities and service. What emerges from their descriptions of the work of planning, budgeting, purchasing and preparing marketplace items for family consumption is a picture of the situation in the marketplace and its effect on the situation in the home from the perspective of women.

(i) Whitehorse

Cost

The high cost of food in Whitehorse was of major concern to women. They offered various explanations of why prices were so high and how they could be reduced. One woman said, "people should expect prices to be higher up here because the Yukon has the highest weekly wage rate in Canada." Another commented that "our grocery bill has doubled in the past two years ... I guess that is one of the reasons why I started working." Many women felt they were "caught up in monopoly prices for food" while others said although prices were high, "they weren't that much higher than down south." What upset them was "seeing prices go up and down like a yo-yo from the beginning of the week to the end." "The pricing policy is crazy," said one woman. "One week juice will be "1.48 and the next week $1.58." Another described the situation this way:

> "One thing I do is buy grapefruit. I used to buy it at 3 for 99¢. I watched it go to $1.09, $1.19, $1.29 and $1.39. I stopped buying it."

From the comments above some of the effects of rapidly rising food costs may be seen. Women cease purchasing products they once regularly bought, and price rises contribute to the decision of some to work outside the home in order to increase family income.

The Economic Research and Planning Unit (ERPU) of the Yukon territorial government has conducted regular price surveys in the Yukon for the past several years. The ERPU February 1979 survey indicated that food prices increased in January and February 1979 in all Yukon communities surveyed. Whitehorse food prices were listed as 35 per cent higher than those in Edmonton and 31 per cent higher than Vancouver food prices. According to the survey, food prices in Whitehorse increased 18.8 per cent in the year ending February 1979. In comparison, there were yearly increases of 13.3 per cent in Edmonton and 13.7 per cent in Vancouver. (Yukon territorial government, Economic Research and Planning Unit, 'Yukon Price Survey - February 1979', p.2,6)

During the course of this project there was considerable debate in Whitehorse about why food prices were so high. Many of our informants spoke about a "monopoly situation" in regard to wholesale food supply. This situation has risen largely through the presence of Kelly Douglas Co. Ltd., a wholesale food supply firm operative in Whitehorse since 1969. Kelly Douglas supplies three of the major Whitehorse grocery stores: Super-Valu (owned and operated by Kelly Douglas), Food Fair and Lewes Market. Our researchers were told by Kelly Douglas representative, Mr. Eby, that Kelly Douglas supplies the three stores with 90 per cent of their dry stock. It also supplies some of the smaller volume outlets with "requirement groceries." Retail food stores can also buy directly from the supplier or from wholesale suppliers in Edmonton. However, Kelly Douglas is the only wholesale food supply firm with offices and a warehouse in the Yukon. (Interview, Kelly Douglas Manager, Mr. Eby, June 1979)

The concern over the food supply "monopoly" of Kelly Douglas was reflected in the comments and action of other individuals and community organizations. Senator Paul Lucier, the Yukon's representative in the Senate, said "things had gone far enough" when his wife paid 69¢ a pound for potatoes. He took action at the federal level by requesting that the National Commission on Inflation "take a look at Kelly Douglas, the Yukon's sole local produce supplier, to try and determine why food prices are so high." (Northern Times, March 14, 1979)

The National Commission on Inflation decided not to undertake a special investigation of Kelly Douglas, but agreed to look at prices in the north generally, including, as well as the Yukon, northern Ontario, Manitoba and other parts of Canada. (Northern Times, May 4, 1979)

The Whitehorse Branch of the Consumers' Association of Canada tried to get an investigation into high food prices under the Combines Investigation Act, but said investigators had found nothing in Whitehorse that justified a full scale inquiry into local food prices. (Northern Times, March 26, 1979) Apparently the Consumers' Association was not happy with the way the investigation was conducted and organized a public forum on food prices. However, the forum was postponed due to a strike at Kelly Douglas by its employees, members of Local 31 of the Teamsters' Union. (Northern Times, May 4, 1979) This strike closed Super-Value, the largest food store in Whitehorse, and all Kelly Douglas wholesale operations for nearly seven weeks in spring 1979. Retail food stores utilized other wholesale food suppliers from outside Yukon during that time.

Representatives from a number of organizations involved in the wholesale and retail food supply business in Whitehorse were interviewed by research team members about food prices. The manager of the Kelly Douglas warehouse in Whitehorse, Mr. Eby, said "freight is a major factor in our business" in that "there's no way a company is going to absorb freight costs." He also commented that "costs are increased when we receive a higher price on our invoice." Mr. Eby said Kelly Douglas has a "mark-up on customers (stores) depending on their volume - this is checked once a month - and small stores with less volume are charged four to six per cent more."

When asked why retail produce prices were different in each store, he stated: "We have no control over retail stores. There's always going to be a difference although they pay the same. Stores choose their own items for specials." (Interview with Mr. Eby, Kelly Douglas Manager, June 1979)

Mr. Palamar, Manager of the Food Fair Store, a major food store in Whitehorse, said he had "100 per cent control" over whom he purchased from and was "convinced we'd be worse off without Kelly Douglas." Food Fair uses Kelly Douglas for about 40 per cent of their stock, buying the remainder of stock from a variety of other wholesalers who operate from Alberta. When asked about Food Fair's purchasing policy, Mr. Palamar said Kelly Douglas is used because "we have a lack of storage space and can get regular deliveries from them," due to the fact that Kelly Douglas operates the only food supply warehouse in the Yukon. Other wholesalers who send in drop shipments from Alberta, were used by Mr. Palamar because "it could be cheaper to deal with others, and Kelly Douglas may not carry the product we need." He uses a formula to add a percentage to wholesale costs, and said there was a one to two per cent difference in cost between the various wholesalers.

Mr. Palamar also felt that freight accounted for higher prices in Whitehorse. He illustrated this by saying that for a case of tomato juice "freight is 9¢ per pound and that means 33¢ extra per can of juice." He admitted that the "competitive situation is higher down south and that helps to keep prices down" but "wished people would compare prices in Whitehorse with other northern communities, not southern ones." (Interview with Mr. Palamar, Food Fair Manager, June 1979)

It is clear from the comments of the managers of Kelly Douglas and Food Fair that although Kelly Douglas does not have a monopoly per se on the wholesale supply of food to the Yukon, it is the largest wholesaler in operation in the area. In addition, Kelly Douglas operates the largest grocery store in Whitehorse and the only food supply warehouse in the Yukon. Any retailer can buy from any supplier, as Mr. Palamar points out, but it is obviously more convenient to purchase from Kelly Douglas.

The Manager of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Mr, Dermot Flynn, said he would like to see a "full blown commission on food prices" although he wondered "why no one else is getting into the food wholesale business if they are making such tremendous profits." He also commented "people have a great deal of control over food prices if they want to exert it. They shouldn't buy all those cokes and chips - don't buy it if it's too expensive or poor quality." (Interview with Dermot Flynn, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce Manager, June 1979) However, food items women mentioned as being expensive and often of poor quality were not coke and chips but vegetables, fruit, meat and dairy products. Most of the Whitehorse women interviewed said they were already developing alternatives to expensive and poor quality food items, but as one woman said, "You can't boycott food, you either buy it or you starve."

Many complaints about high food prices have been received by the Whitehorse Office of the Consumers' Association. The office co-ordinator of the Consumers' Association, Jean Morris, commented that the lack of truly competitive stores was something the group would like to investigate, but lack of staff and funding prohibited such research. She also confirmed the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs had the authority and ability to investigate unexplained price increases but "very seldom do ...

They don't want to get involved ... not enough people complain." (Interview with Jean Morris, Whitehorse Consumers' Association, June 1979)

The interviews with food suppliers and retailers show although freight costs add to the cost of goods, the volume purchased from the supplier is a cost factor as well. Smaller food stores, which are charged four to six per cent more than larger volume purchasers, may have more economic difficulty and cannot be competitive.

Whitehorse and Fort Nelson women cope with the high cost of food in a variety of ways. Factors such as their income, number of children, marital status, access to transportation, ability to hunt or garden all influence the extent to which high food prices affected them.

"Pathetic", "outrageous" and "frustrating" were words women used to describe the shopping situation in Whitehorse. Some said they belonged to a food co-op where they pay lower prices for food although they must in turn invest a considerable amount of time to enable the co-op to function. One woman commented that her family has always had a greenhouse which "is a paying hobby in this climate." Several women reported working more on preparing and producing their own food through gardening. Others said they used hunting and fishing to supplement the food they purchased. However, even fishing and hunting were becoming more difficult:

> "We rely on fresh game and fish for food ... You used to be able to shoot a moose quite easily and have it to eat all winter. Now with stricter hunting regulations the situation is more difficult. This is the first year we didn't get a moose - there even seems to be less fish and more people fishing."

Another woman, a single parent, said she didn't have a place for a garden or greenhouse and was unable to obtain wild meat or fish. When berries are ripe she picks them, but commented that high food prices means that "we often do without or buy less than we need because of the cost."

Nearly all our informants stock up with foods on sale, or substitute lower-priced foods for what were previously regular items. "I buy only specials. If meat is not on special I substitute something else. I buy canned food on special and stock up. And I won't buy fruit except on special," said one woman. Another woman had a different method of coping with high prices. She shops at one grocery store and "I never shop around as I like to complain. And if I stick with one store this gives me the right to complain!" Ordering a large quantity of meat through a distributor in Vancouver is a method one woman used to avoid the high price and poor quality of meat available locally. As she has a freezer this is an economical method for her.

Quality of goods

The poor quality of fresh produce was a concern of many women in Whitehorse. "I find it upsetting that groceries can't be fresh," said one woman. A former resident of Yellowknife, she said the selection is better than in Yellowknife but "still leaves a lot of be desired."

The manager of the Kelly Douglas warehouse, Mr. Eby, said fresh fruit and vegetables were trucked directly from California once a week, and that quality was hard to control:

> "Let's face it - we have quality problems at times. The produce person orders through a broker's packer in California. Unless that person is in the field he doesn't know what the final product is like. If we get an order that's bad we call our broker, we can put it in the dump, get assistance from the broker or pass it on to the consumer. Because of our geographic location we cannot pick up the phone and say 'Send another batch up.'"
>
> (Interview, Kelly
> Douglas Manager,
> Mr. Eby, June 1979)

Food Fair Manager Mr. Palamar explained: "You're at the mercy of a lot of things when it comes to produce including the producer, the wholesaler and the shipper." He described his dilemma:

> "This week we received a bunch of bananas greener than grass. Last week they were overripe. We really don't have a choice - we take what we get."
>
> (Interview, Food Fair
> Manager, Mr. Palamar,
> June 1979)

He also added that poor storage facilities in his store affect produce quality.

Most of our informants said they usually refused to buy poor quality foods. "I hardly look at fresh produce as the quality is so bad," said one woman. This was characteristic of many Whitehorse women. Some women said they shopped at different stores according to which had better quality produce.

As a result of the poor quality of fresh produce, women take more time to try and find adequate foodstuffs for their families. In many instances, they do without what are considered basic foods or made do with food they find unsatisfactory.

Availability of goods

In general most women felt an adequate variety of goods was offered for sale in Whitehorse: "The selection is not huge, but it's good for a community this size ... Perhaps people who move here from larger communities expect more and put pressure on to have more. Their demands may be met and that may be partly why so much is available." Food Fair Manager Mr. Palamar noted that "we carry a greater variety of stock than we should for the size of the store. To satisfy the people we carry more than is economical, and it doesn't move." A number of women recently arrived in Whitehorse said they were "surprised at how good the shopping is up here."

On the availability of consumer goods (other than food) in Whitehorse, a woman commented that "small picky things aren't available. Miscellaneous shopping for sewing, craft or specialty supplies isn't good." Many women said it was difficult to find a varied selection of shoes, maternity clothes, children's clothing and home furnishings. Women with access to the "outside", either through their work, their husband's work, or when on vacation, said they often purchased needed items while away. Some informants ordered special items by mail, but were frustrated at the length of time it took the goods to arrive. Although several Whitehorse informants commented that living in the north changes one's clothing needs and "one has to be practical," many women said they often sewed their own clothes and their children's clothes as the selection was poor and the prices high in local stores.

Facilities and service

Shopping facilities in Whitehorse were frequently described as "crowded". Our informants felt this was a relatively recent phenomenon, due to the population growth of the past few years. They tried to shop at times when the stores were not overly busy, although the possibility of doing so depended on their access to transportation, number of children they had to take with them, or on their hours of work if they worked outside the home. Some of our informants said they changed stores if they were unhappy with the crowds or other aspects of a store: "Shopping is an important outing for me," said one woman. "I like to take my time and enjoy it." One woman who shops only once a week because of transportation problems, said she finds specials sold out, produce scanty and stores crowded on the weekend. She feels there should be more stores, particularly small local ones. This thought was echoed by another woman who said, "shopping is not so easy because it is so spread out and that's not easy with two little kids."

The commercial land use recommendations in the Whitehorse Survey completed in 1975, state that provision should be made in future residential outline plans for the establishment of neighbourhood stores. It also recommends that provision should be made for the development of small district shopping plazas for groups of two or more neighbourhoods. (Stanley & Associates Engineering, Whitehorse Survey, 1975, p.9) Two new food stores were opened in the Porter Creek area in June 1979. If they are successful it may mean that more small, local businesses will open.

(ii) Fort Nelson

Prices, facilities, quality and availability of goods were concerns Fort Nelson women shared with Whitehorse women. Fort Nelson informants said a greater variety of local stores was needed. "I can't live here without my catalogue, especially for the little things that are so hard to find here," said one woman. A shoe store and an improved selection of children's clothing were most often mentioned as particular needs. Women also said a florist, new hobby shop, Bank of Montreal and drive-in restaurant were needed. A shoe store did open in Fort Nelson in June 1979. The owner told our interviewers she started the enterprise because she could not buy shoes for her own children in the town. (Yvonne Collinson, owner, Yvonne's Shoes. Fort Nelson, June 1979)

A number of women felt the two large food stores were competitive and that shopping was adequate given the size of the town. However, others felt that the geographical isolation of Fort Nelson played a part in the high prices of goods: "Some things are marked up as high as 200 per cent." One informant felt that "isolation is an excuse to raise the price."

Like the Whitehorse women, Fort Nelson women had a direct way of managing the problem of high food prices: "You pay the price or go without." Women also produced food at home by "growing my own garden and raising almost everything,"pickling, preserving and freezing.

Fort Nelson women spoke most frequently of the need for more competition. They commented: "They should build a new mall and get some competition", "Build a Kresge's for more competition", "We're in desperate need of competition both in food and clothing." Poor or unfriendly service in stores was often commented upon. It may be linked to the lack of competition as one informant suggested: "No one gives a damn because if you don't like the services they offer, you go without ... It's bad because the clerks don't have to be friendly."

B. Summary - Shopping:

All our informants in both Whitehorse and Fort Nelson expressed opinions about shopping. Shopping is a constant element in their lives, continuing even when a woman works outside the home. They are concerned about the effect of being considered a captive market, and they resent having to pay very high prices for goods necessary to their family's well being. Substituting other items, shopping around, going without, gardening, home preserving, hunting and fishing are methods used by Whitehorse and Fort Nelson women to reduce the effect of high prices and low quality of basic foods they need to maintain themselves and their families.

The cost, availability and quality of food influence the quality of life in the community. For as costs increase, problems increase: the worries and difficulties women in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson face in dealing with the high cost and often poor quality of consumer goods, particularly food, make their task of home management more difficult.

4.2.2 Women and the Family: Family Maintenance

Women's concern about the well-being of their partners and children appeared in relation to all issues discussed between informants and researchers. Interviews revealed the support that women provide for the family begins in the home and extends into all parts of the community and its infrastructure. Our informants' comments also indicate that effective maintenance of the family unit, whether the family is a couple, single parent with children or couple with children, is a responsibility women take very seriously.

A. Partner:

Women in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson manage the home and family under varying circumstances. Their comments reveal the adjustments they make to accommodate personal and family needs to their partner's work. The adjustments vary: some families are regularly uprooted; some do without the presence of husband and father for long periods; others adjust at frequent intervals to employment or unemployment variations.

It is important to clarify that the women interviewed were not complaining about the extent of influence of their husbands' jobs. However, their comments do show that much of their lives was determined by their husband's work: "My husband likes his job, it determines where we'll be going and what we'll be doing." "My husband's job is definitely the reason we're here. We wouldn't have it so good in the south." One woman said, "I live my life around his work, but he loves his job." The women interviewed accept their partner's work situation, and it was important to them that their partners were satisfied in their work. They were concerned with maintaining the family unit, combining their family's needs and their needs with the demands of their partner's work, and making sure that all were met.

Women spoke of the profound effect their partner's work had on how they managed their personal life, the home life and the family's relation to the community. They described their role as supporter and maintainer of the household in a region of the country where work opportunities for men often involve much travel and long periods of time away from home. It is important to take into account the subsequent work undertaken by the woman in order to adapt to her partner's personal and work needs, and to recognize the support system she provides that helps make possible his work in the public world.

As well as speaking of the effect of their partner's work, Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women talked of the particular needs of couples living in isolated northern communities.

Most of the women who talked at length of their partner's work had partners who were employed in shift work, bush work or office work which necessitated much time away from home. Shift work included jobs such as police and mill workers; bush work included jobs in logging, road construction, oil and gas exploration/maintenance, engineering and trapping; office work included government jobs that involved frequent travel. Women whose partners worked in these jobs said they found the necessary adjustments difficult.

The effect upon the women and families of partners who were absent from home was considerable. Some women found it impossible to keep a permanent job because his changing work and travel patterns demanded a certain flexibility of availability from her. Others found themselves unable to get involved in community activities for the same reason. The community and social life of the couple was also affected, and family routine disrupted.

Women dealt with their partner's travel in various ways. Some move themselves and their families along with him. A woman interviewed in Fort Nelson spends eight months in Fort St. John and four months in Fort Nelson each year. Her husband works out of Fort Nelson in the winter doing oil-patch work and, as she prefers to be with her husband, she and her son move up from Fort St. John to set up a home in Fort Nelson for four months. She said that "people from the town (Fort Nelson) are starting to warm up to me when I say I'm here for my fourth winter." She said she had made one good friend but found people don't want to make friends if she's here only for a short time. She is making efforts to make friends and has "how not to be depressed down to a science" by taking "cheer-up" courses at night school. In order that the family can be together and her husband have some home comforts so he can carry out his work, this woman has become a modern nomad, packing up household goods and moving after her husband's work.

A Whitehorse woman dealt with a similar situation in a different manner. Her husband works in road construction and is often out of town during the summer: "We usually join him during the summer months and manage without him on the border months. He is at home during the winter. It definitely affects our life, but we've lived this way for 15 years and he is happy when he is working on the road." She works part time while her husband is away and her children are in school so "time won't chafe." Because she does not drive she says her biggest problem is that "the kids and I can't get around when he's not here." She also commented that their son "really needs a father around especially as he gets older."

Many women said they wished their children could have more interaction with their fathers. They also wanted to share more of the child-rearing decisions with their partners but could not due to his long absences or intense involvement with his work. One woman said, "I sometimes get lonely and depressed when he's out. I have the whole load of responsibility of the kids and the house. It wasn't bad before the kids came, but it's more difficult now to move around or to be left alone."

Most women said they have had to learn to adjust to their partner's comings and goings. A Whitehorse woman said most of the women she knows in Whitehorse have husbands who are out of town a great deal and "this tends to make women more independent and interdependent ... There is a lot of adjustment involved." She added that "after five years of marriage we have finally got it together but it's difficult to keep it together." Another said she adjusts by "living two lives, one when my husband is home and the other when he is away." When he is home, she said, they were generally alone together and did a lot of things like fishing and snowmobiling and when he was away her social contacts broadened as she involved herself in outside recreation and community service. Another woman whose husband was involved in occasional travel around the Yukon and to southern cities said, "It used to upset me, but I've learned to cope now. I used to live our lives around his coming and going ... We can't do that." Some women whose partners work in well paid jobs said fringe benefits such as expense accounts or accompanying him on trips "outside" helped make up for his absences. According to a Fort Nelson woman:

> "If a woman is going to come to Fort Nelson with her man she had better be self-reliant, independent and have a good relationship with her man. Otherwise the marriage is going to fall to the stresses connected with her 'foreign-ness' to the community, his long hours and the amount of time she has on her hands."

This woman speaks from her experience of travelling with her husband in pipeline work in northern B.C., the Yukon and northern Alberta over the past 10 years.

The absence of her husband did not present any special problems to one Whitehorse woman as her parents live in Whitehorse and assist her with the children. However, most of the women interviewed in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse did not have close family at hand. Many women found it very difficult when close friends moved away. Most tended to make and maintain friendships with women who had come to town around the time of their arrival.

Shiftwork, unemployment and worry about possible unemployment were other concerns raised by our informants. One woman said her partner comes home awake and restless from the graveyard shift: this makes it difficult for her to sleep and affects her own job performance. He also works a great deal of overtime, and she notes that with so little time to be together their "relationship becomes difficult." Another woman's partner is unhappy in his present job and is seeking alternative work. She fears that once again he may have to accept a job that will take him away from home a great deal. And the partner of one woman works as a "househusband". Unable to find satisfactory employment, he is taking care of their child and home while she works full time. She is not happy with her job but the income she earns is vital for them.

Women spoke of the importance of having their social needs as a couple met, but this clearly was less of a priority than balancing work, family and home needs. Social activities such as visiting friends, going out for dinner, getting involved in recreational activities as a couple or family, or participating in community activities were mentioned as ways that social needs were filled. The social support system of the church was said to be important to their families by many informants. Outdoor recreation, including skiing, hiking, camping and canoeing was frequently mentioned as activities couples and families could enjoy together. However, informants said equipment was very costly especially if there were several children in the family.

Many women said more indoor recreation facilities were needed, particularly for use in the winter. Several said they occasionally went to the bars with their partners or with a group of people. Lately they had stopped going, however, because the bars were "too crowded and too expensive."

In Fort Nelson, our informants felt adult sports were well organized but thought family oriented recreation was limited. Several women said they would like more family oriented restaurants so that husband, wife and children could go out for a reasonably priced dinner. Fort Nelson women also wanted "some place to go for special occasions" and "a nicer place to dine and dance." They found entertainment for a couple was "nil" or "revolved too much around alcohol." One woman said "going to the cabaret is a trial. If you want to dress up the guys leer that 'hungry man' look." Most women said they usually socialize with friends at home or create their own entertainment. Some commented that their husband's long work hours meant "we don't go out much."

Women in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse said marriage breakdown was a common problem. Isolation from family and friends, the absence of their husbands for long periods, and loneliness contributed to feelings of incompatibility and marriage breakdowns. The task of maintaining and guiding the family unit through a deterioration in the relationship of the couple is most often carried by the woman. Informants stressed the need for more counselling and support services for individuals and couples.

The Yukon Family Services Association counselled 67 couples between April 1, 1977 and March 30, 1978. Of 61 other persons seen individually, 40 were women who worked mainly as homemakers. Statistics in the 'Yukon Family Services Association Annual Report, 1977-78' indicate the most prevalent problem is incompatibility. (D. Shaw, Executive Director's Annual Report, 'Yukon Family Services Association 1978', pp.1,4,7)

The Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre in Whitehorse reported that marriage breakdown was their primary counselling area. The Centre's co-ordinator, Sheila Benson, in an interview with researchers, said their experience as a counselling and crisis service leads them to believe that marriage breakdown and wife battering are major problems for Whitehorse women. Approximately half of the 805 calls and 1358 visitors to the Centre from July 1, 1978 to December 30, 1978 involved requests for counselling and legal assistance. (Interview, Sheila Benson, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, June 1979)

Whitehorse mental health nurse Sharon Roe said depression was the most prevalent problem, especially for women, and marital problems were exacerbated by this state. About 30 per cent of Ms. Roe's time is spent in designing and presenting preventative community programs including assertiveness training, coping with stress, child-rearing and so forth. (Interview with Sharon Roe, Whitehorse Mental Health Nurse, June 1979)

As there are no mental health or family counselling services in Fort Nelson, women in need of support counselling often approach the women's centre, local clergy, Ministry of Human Resources staff, or most frequently, their own friends. Apparently the Alcohol and Drug Commission received a grant for $87,000 in order to set up an out-patient counselling service in Fort Nelson to "meet the needs of people suffering from alcoholism, mental illness and marital breakdown." (Fort Nelson News, August 8, 1979) At the time of writing, Fort Nelson residents had not heard any more of the project plans

B. Summary - Partner:

The above section on 'Women and the Family: Family Maintenance' has clarified how women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse accommodate their personal and family needs to their partner's work needs. The kind of work a man does shapes the life of the family. Our informants made the necessary adjustments to maintain their family stability.

These adjustments were made mainly because of economic necessity: the women are often dependent upon their partner's income, and the type of work available to their partners is often that which takes them away from home for long periods.

Our informants spoke of a high incidence of marriage difficulties and breakdown in their communities. Marriage breakdown is often facilitated by the breakdown of communication between a couple, and this can be aggravated by depression, isolation, or the frequent or long absence of a partner, in addition to concern about the special needs of children, etc.

Men's work is shaped by the needs of the employer, and although a male partner may like or need that work, it is clear that there is no accommodation made for the family's needs by the employer. It is possible to speculate therefore, that living and working in a northern community such as Fort Nelson and Whitehorse can put a couple's relationship and the family, "at risk". Informants felt the design of support services should take into account the special needs created by climatic extremes, isolation and economic pressure on the family that are prevalent in their communities.

C. Children:

Raising children in small isolated communities poses some difficulties: such communities have fewer services available to meet the day-to-day needs and special needs of children. Informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse were concerned about the health, education, recreation and childcare of their children.

Despite the difficulties or lack of services our informants perceived in their communities, many were glad to be raising children in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. They were happy to be raising their children in a small town rather than in a large city. Some women had chosen to come north and raise a family, others born and raised in the north were now having their own families.

In both communities women with children spoke at length about their children's needs and how they, as mothers, worked to meet those needs. One woman said she felt all children were under a great deal of pressure in today's society and she, as a mother, felt a responsibility to "help my kids deal with those pressures." Many women expressed similar feeling and their concern for their children influences many aspects of their lives including their relationship with their partner, decisions about childcare, work outside the home and community involvement.

The 1970 'Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada' stated as one of its four principles that "the care of children is a responsibility to be shared by the mother, the father and society." ('Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada', p.xii) However, the care of children is still largely undertaken by the mother in our society. She may receive some assistance from friends, family, an institution or partner who aids in child-rearing, but the ultimate responsibility for the quality of her children's lives is hers. Nor does small family size mean that caring for children is easier and that there is less housework: "Evidence points to the fact that caring for one child may require almost as much time as looking after two or more children, especially when an infant or toddler is involved." ('Rural Women's Study', Council on Rural Development, p.30)

This section of the report concentrates on children's needs. Given the responsibility felt by our informants for their own children and indeed all children in their communities, information gathered by the researchers is presented at length. The section is divided into four parts dealing with the major concerns women expressed in regard to children: health, education, childcare and recreation.

The interviews with the women of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse reveal the kind of services women need to help them in the work of raising children. The effect of the lack of such services upon the women and children of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse is detailed.

(i) Health:

WHITEHORSE

Whitehorse informants stressed the need for a full time pediatrician. As one woman said, "With so many families and young children up here it's strange that there isn't a pediatrician." The turnover of doctors is high: "It's difficult to get a family doctor, even the long time doctors are leaving now."

Whitehorse women were concerned about the lack of specialists. One woman whose child required specialized care for eczema said "the problem is that the situation can be clear when the specialist comes and be terrible a few days later."

Several informants reported there had been confusion with public health over vaccination dates and pre-school examinations. According to one mother, "One nurse said one thing, and another nurse said something else. He ended up getting his shot several months after he should have." However, women who spoke of the school dental program said it was excellent, and "we should be thankful. Lots of provinces don't provide any dental care."

The 'Report on Health Conditions in the Yukon Territories' by Health and Welfare Canada notes that pediatric services visited Whitehorse on three occasions in 1978 for a total of 15 days. Fifty patients were attended to on each visit. (Canada, 'Report on Health Conditions in the Yukon', p.40) The Director of the Yukon Department of Health, Tom Duncan, commented in an interview with researchers that "although specialists work their butts off when they come, there isn't the workload to keep, for example, a full time pediatrician here." He estimated that given the approximately 5,000 children in the school system, one or two per cent required pediatric services, and the patient load would be too small to maintain a full time pediatrician in Whitehorse. He also felt that there was not a sufficient population base in Whitehorse to provide full time work for other resident specialists. As specialists are available in Whitehorse for two weeks, three or four times a year, he felt Whitehorse was "very well serviced, on a par with Vancouver and Edmonton." (Interview, T. Duncan, Director of Health, June 1979)

A number of women said the health care system did meet their family's basic needs. One woman commented, "We have a choice." Another said she felt medical services were good, then added, "but we've never had a great deal of sickness in our family." The difficulties arise when special medical services are needed.

FORT NELSON

Opinion varied about the quality of health care for children in Fort Nelson. One woman stated unless her children were drastically ill they "don't go to doctors here, they go outside for medical care." A long term resident said she was "grateful for what is here now compared to the past." Yet another woman said she was concerned about the medical judgement of local doctors. A local doctor had told her that nothing was wrong with her baby, but it was later discovered to have a heart defect.

A travelling children's clinic visits Fort Nelson twice each year, usually providing eye and ear/nose/throat specialists, and specialists in orthopedics and pediatrics. In order to consult the specialists, a referral from the family doctor is necessary. The 'Annual Report of the Peace River Health Unit - 1977' notes, "This has been a valuable service to parents and physicians as transportation costs to major cities and specialists have more than doubled in the last few years." The report also notes that the region's public health nurse made all arrangements for the clinic's visit to Fort Nelson, and this was "taxing" upon her time. (J. Wick, 'Annual Report of the Peace River Health Unit - 1977', p.10)

(ii) Education:

WHITEHORSE

Problems associated with overcrowded schools, the need for improved special education services and the desire for native-controlled education for Indian students were the chief concerns of the Whitehorse informants. Most of the women interviewed felt the teachers and the curriculum were good but that facilities and special services were in need of improvement.

Informants were worried about the effect of overcrowded and temporary school facilities on their children. One woman said her son had spent three out of four school years in a portable classroom located outside the main school, and felt "that's unfair for him."

The Northern Times reported that a study commissioned by the Territorial Department of Education, completed in fall 1978, recommended the following: the construction of a new elementary school in Riverdale in 1979 and in Hillcrest in 1982, and that new schools be constructed in Porter Creek by 1980. However, Education Minister Doug Graham announced in the Yukon legislature that no capital funding had been requested for the projects, nor had funding been requested for the expansion of an overcrowded school in Riverdale. (Northern Times, March 13, 1979)

Busing became a much discussed issue in Whitehorse as Department of Education officials decided to bus children from the overcrowded Selkirk Elementary School in Riverdale to the less crowded Whitehorse Elementary School in downtown Whitehorse. Parents did not appreciate this, and the Northern Times newspaper reported that some threatened to take their children out of school and others threatened to move out of the district. They pointed out that a number of parents originally moved to the Riverdale area so their children would be able to walk to school. (Northern Times, March 19, 1979) A woman who lived in the Porter Creek area of Whitehorse commented that "everyone would like to see a junior and senior high school in Porter Creek" rather than have their children travel all the way to the city's only secondary school which was located several miles away in Riverdale.

The women want adequate and effective schools to be provided for their children, preferably close to the family home. Schools close to home would ease transportation problems, and make it easier for children to be involved in after-school activities. It would also encourage the development of the neighbourhood's social structure.

A number of women said they did not feel the present education system met the needs of Indian children. They called for special courses on Indian culture, or for Indian control over Indian education. "Indian people in the vocational school are there because public school didn't meet their needs - so they quit. And now they're being slotted into the vocational school," said one woman.

The June 1979 issue of 'Yukon Teacher' printed an open letter to teachers from an Indian mother. She questioned if the education system could help her son acquire the intellectual skills he needed without imposing the teacher's values "on top of those he already had." ('Yukon Teacher', June 1979, p.5)

Carol Sundmark of the Yukon Native Brotherhood stated that aspects of Indian culture are being incorporated into the school program in a number of Yukon classrooms, and increased interest, enthusiasm and application among students generally results. ('Yukon Teacher', June 1979, p.7)

The 1976 Yukon Association for Non-Status Indians (YANSI) report on education, 'Barriers to Education', by Ted Parnell, concludes:

> "The Department of Education says it can't have special programs for one racial group because this would be discrimination. Yet it does provide money for some children who are having special difficulties in school. If it can provide money for some groups, it is only fair that it should provide money for others who are having special difficulties. Native children deserve this help, not because they are a special racial group, but because they are a group of children who are having troubles in school. The present policy of the department discriminates against native children because the schools aren't set up to meet their needs."
>
> (Parnell, p. 9)

Other observations about the special learning needs of children came from informants concerned about handicaps and learning disabilities. One woman said: "I had a child in grade eight with an undetected hearing difficulty who was kept in the slow learners class." She wanted better testing to be available before children were placed in special classes. Another woman's son has a learning disability and she commented that "he could have used special help years ago but didn't get much."

A study of children with handicaps and problems was completed by the Yukon Association for Children with Learning Disabilities in June 1978. The study concluded that: 1) There is a large number of children in the Yukon who have handicaps or problems, and their needs are not being fully met within the Yukon; 2) The majority of facilities currently existing within the Yukon do not adequately meet the needs of special children of the Yukon; 3) To meet the needs of Yukon children there must be an expansion of most present services as well as the addition of new services. (Nicholson, Christensen, p. 46)

The study, entitled the '1,000 Needs Report' states that "it is wrong to believe that the numbers of children with problems or handicaps will decline due to families moving out of the Yukon in order to find adequate services," and that "considering the growth that is predicted for the Territory during the construction of the pipeline in the near future, it is likely that the population of children who require special services will increase proportionally." (Nicholson, Christensen, p. 3) The report also expressed concern over the rise in number of fetal alcohol syndrome children in the Yukon, commenting that the rise was not necessarily due to an increase in maternal alcoholism, but was perhaps due to advances in medical awareness in how to keep these children alive. Furthermore, "the pediatrician who visits Whitehorse regularly feels these children should be of major concern to us all, because a) they are now surviving infancy in greater numbers; b) they are born with greater frequency in the Yukon than in other parts of Canada, and c) they require highly specialized care and treatment programs due to their multiplicity of problems, both mental and physical." (Ibid, pages 53 - 54)

Bill Albert, supervisor of special education in the Yukon Department of Education maintained that "special education is better here than anywhere else." (Interview, Bill Albert, Whitehorse, June 1979) There are 14 special education teachers in Whitehorse who work as specialists and consult with Mr. Albert on programs and budgets. "We deal with emotional problems, behaviour problems, learning disabilities, blind, deaf, physically disable and mentally retarded," he commented. According to Mr. Albert about 1,000 children, approximately 25 per cent of the school population, have problems, and "these children get serviced in one way or another - teachers, myself, others, or sent out." The only complaint he receives is that "staff are not well trained" but said "we have to make do with what we get." There was money in the budget for training programs, said Mr. Albert,but training "doesn't happen very often."

The Yukon Department of Education hired a consultant to evaluate existing services in the Special Education Branch of the Department in October 1978. The report, by Frances Fleming entitled 'Recommendations to the Department of Education, Yukon Territory, on the Delivery of Special Education Service and Kindred Matters' made 16 recommendations. These covered a wide area, including a call for "a broader and more visible co-ordination of services" and the hiring of an educational psychologist to work in conjunction with present special education staff. (Fleming, p. 10)

The Northern Times reported that the Yukon Teachers' Association and Yukon Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association reacted favourably to the report (Northern Times, August 13, 1979) Bill Albert,supervisor of special education, told researchers that a working committee had been formed within the department to "find a rational way to implement the recommendations in the report." He said schools were being asked for feedback, and eventually recommendations would be made to the politicians and "they'll find the funds or they won't." (Interview, Bill Albert, Supervisor, Special Education, Yukon Territorial Government, Department of Education, June 1979, Whitehorse)

FORT NELSON

Fort Nelson women expressed much interest in the learning situation experienced by their children. Quality of education and teachers, family life education, vandalism and school overcrowding were their main concerns.

Fort Nelson's only 'middle school', consisting of grades 8 and 9, was destroyed by fire in April 1979. Students have been housed in portable classrooms on the grounds of the secondary school since the middle school burnt down. As well as a great many comments about the need to rebuild the middle school, informants urged that an elementary school be built in the East Subdivision to "service the large number of primary school children who live in that area."

Like the Whitehorse women, Fort Nelson women desire neighbourhood schools that young children can walk to safely. One woman said she did a survey several years ago and "found 300 kids in that area (East Subdivision) alone." She wondered why three of the four schools were "up on the hill", away from the populated subdivisions.

The quality of education, including the number and type of courses available for students, possibilities for post-secondary education, experience and ability of teachers and administrations were major points raised about secondary education in Fort Nelson. One woman said, "The high school and school board should have a good shaking up." Another felt teachers were too lenient with students: "If they used more discipline then there would be less vandalism." She also felt there were "too many new teachers." However, other women felt the teachers were doing the best they could, and "are young and enthusiastic." An informant noted there was a lack of respect for teachers in Fort Nelson and felt that the teachers "don't earn it." She added that this problem is "all over the place and not just in Fort Nelson." One comment summarized many informants' feelings:

> "Teachers come here for one of three reasons: to get ahead in their career, nothing better turned up, or they are genuinely interested in the north - and this goes for the administration too."

There are no opportunities for exceptional children, either bright or retarded, said a number of women. They would like to see "learning programs used with specially trained teachers" as it was unreasonable to expect regular teachers to devote enough time to each problem group.

Vandalism preoccupied our informants. Twenty-two acts of vandalism against Fort Nelson teachers were reported from January 1978 to February 1979. This focussed community attention on teachers, the student-teacher relationship and the school administration. In January 1979, teachers appeared before the Fort Nelson School Board demanding that they "be protected from intense harassment and vandalism occurring both while on Board property and in the safety of their own homes." (Fort Nelson News, January 17, 1979) A subsequent meeting with the RCMP, School Board, Chamber of Commerce, school advisory committees and interested members of the general public brought forward a number of reasons for the vandalism, including students' abuse of alcohol, the condoning of violence by adults, and vengeful actions against the school system by students who have been failed. It was noted that vandalism was being carried out by a core group of six to eight students. This group was influencing a further 20 to 30 students to be involved in vandalism. The local superintendent of schools, Mr. D. Lynn, said that the larger group had a "significant impact on the school and these acts, and the intimidation by the larger group, inhibits the learning process in the school." (Fort Nelson News, January 17, 1979)

Mr. P. McMuldroch, Director of Education in School District 81 - 87, felt it could be difficult to attract good teachers to the community given the extent of the vandalism, and "it will be a tough job to provide quality education." (Fort Nelson News, January 17, 1979)

The local Chamber of Commerce hired a full time "Veto Vandalism" co-ordinator. In addition, a group called Parents Interested in Education (P.I.E.) was formed to investigate problems in the schools. The group was concerned about the vandalism that had occurred, why students were voluntarily leaving school shortly before graduation, and the fact that 21 teachers were leaving the school district in June 1979. The group was also concerned that many parents experienced frustration when dealing with school staff and administration. P.I.E. put together a comprehensive brief, and met with the Minister of Education and the region's Member of the Legislative Assembly in Victoria in June 1979 to request an in-depth investigation of the problems of Fort Nelson schools. (Fort Nelson News, July 4, 1979)

The 'Annual Report of the District Superintendent of Schools, June 1979' for School District 81 (Fort Nelson) noted that 23 teachers or 33.8 per cent of the teachers employed by the district were "new to this district this school year." Of the 23 teachers new to the district, eight had previous teaching experience. The turnover among teachers in the 1978-79 school year was 31 per cent: this was seen as "fairly consistent with turnover rates experienced in recent history." (D. Lynn, 'Annual Report of the District Superintendent of Schools, June 1979', p.4))

However, Mr. J. London, Principal of the Fort Nelson Secondary School, noted that the average stay of teachers in Fort Nelson was increasing. He attributed this to a shortage of teaching jobs elsewhere in B.C., and also felt the shortage meant that better qualified teachers were coming to Fort Nelson. (Interview with J. London, Principal, Fort Nelson Secondary School, Fort Nelson, June 1979)

Mr. London also noted that approximately 50 students graduated from the secondary school in 1979, a significant increase from the 26 who graduated in 1978. He felt this increase was due to the greater number of families with teenage children moving into Fort Nelson. In 1978, seven students (out of 26) went on to universities or community colleges. In 1979, eight students (our of 50) went on to post-secondary education. The majority of students went into local commerce and industry. Mr. London noted that FNSS became an accredited high school in 1978. Prior to accreditation, a student was "sent out" for the last two years of high school if they were "university material".

Concern over the small number of secondary students continuing to post-secondary education was indicated in the research study carried out for School District 81 (Fort Nelson) by Alan Newberry and the Education Research Institute of British Columbia. His 1977 study, entitled 'Factors Which Influence Student Transition from a Small Secondary School to a Post-Secondary

Institution', concluded that a majority of the respondents did not feel their secondary school preparation was adequate for their post-secondary experience. The report also concluded the funding of post-secondary programs, career education programs, counselling and parental attitudes were critical factors in a student's decision whether or not to continue with higher education. Of the students interviewed, 74.9 per cent felt the temptation of high paying local jobs served to lower the wish to continue post-secondary education. (Newberry, p. 5)

Of personal factors that influenced transition from a small school to a post-secondary institution, 83.3 per cent of the respondents stated that "young marriage served to lower educational aspirations." (Newberry, p. 46)

Marriage at a young age is seen as lowering educational aspirations. This relates directly to another concern of many Fort Nelson women, that is, the need for a family life education course in the schools. Comments were explicit: "There is a crying need for family life education in the schools - right now there is an outbreak of crabs at the school, probably the guys on the rigs are responsible." "Family planning is needed because of the high rate of young girls getting pregnant." One woman felt "there should be family life education here with parental input and participation." And "there are so many pregnant young teens here - it is stupid." "Family life education including alcohol information is needed." One informant objected to doctors telling "girls who have babies to keep them," and another felt "a girl's counsellor is needed for the high school."

Mr. McMuldroch, Director of Instruction, when asked why family life education was not offered replied: "The issue was raised a few years ago but the school board decided against it." (Interview, Mr. McMuldroch, June 1979)

The high school principal, Mr. London, did not feel a family life education course would be given until "there is a well-organized community push for it and then the school board has to pass it." (Interview, Mr. London, FNSS Principal, Fort Nelson, June 1979)

However, on March 7, 1979 the Fort Nelson News reported that a high school counsellor asked the school board for permission to have discussion on teenage pregnancies and birth control methods in the school. The counsellor felt this was necessary "considering the number of girls who have become pregnant in the last few months." The matter was referred to the Advisory Council for further discussion. (Fort Nelson News, March 7, 1979)

(iii) Childcare:

Three types of childcare were described by our informants: paid care at a daycare centre, paid "family day-home" care, and unpaid, co-operative babysitting organized between friends. Women working outside the home used daycare centres or family day-homes. Women who did not work outside the home, occasionally used centres or day-homes for part of a day if part time care was offered, but more frequently set up neighbourhood babysitting to meet their needs.

Women in both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse described co-op babysitting, or "child exchange - kid-swap" as a good arrangement. They utilized it to enable themselves to have the occasional day, or part of a day, without having to contend with children. Co-op babysitting does involve some work, not the least of which is returning the favour!

WHITEHORSE

Whitehorse informants voiced strong complaints about the childcare services and facilities available to them. While they did feel the childcare costs were reasonable, they were concerned about the lack of childcare licensing standards and the lack of professional childcare workers. "It's the worst, with the lowest standards," said many informants of facilities in Whitehorse. "I could tell you stories of blankets filled with head lice"; "overcrowded, no standards"; "lack of professional childcare workers" were some of the comments of Whitehorse women. One said, "I've worked in one ... It was like a jungle, there were so many kids and so little room." Another woman, who works part time outside her home, said, "I used to leave the kids with a sitter who had eight or ten kids in her two bedroom apartment. She couldn't give any of them the care they needed." She would not leave her children there if she worked full time, but felt that "occasionally it was all right for them to be there." Another woman spoke of a daycare nearby where one woman "has fourteen children she cares for by herself."

The recent history of childcare organizing in the Yukon dates from 1969 when a survey by the Yukon Social Services Centre indicated that daycare was needed in the community. In February 1969, the first daycare centre was founded. In 1979 there were seven daycare centres and 29 day-homes documented by the Yukon Child Care Association (YCCA).

The YCCA was formed largely in response to the Yukon Territorial Government's request that separate daycare centres form an association to act as a spokesperson, set daycare standards and receive and distribute funds for daycare. The first YCCA executive was elected in 1974.

The YCCA has investigated the need for daycare facilities in outlying communities, written policy papers, investigated daycare funding schemes across Canada, made representations to government for direct funding to childcare centres, written operating standards for centres, compiled referral lists and resource books for in-home care, initiated childcare training courses at the vocational school and continually lobbied the Yukon government for action on childcare standards and funding. The considerable work undertaken by the YCCA has been done by volunteers with some assistance from federal funding programs over the years.

The president and vice-president of the Yukon Childcare Association commented on the problems of organizing around childcare: "Money spent on kids is not seen as an investment, and the continual change in government creates a problem. We are dealing with politicians and up here that's not easy." (Interview, Bernd Schmidt, Vice-President, Judy Kleczowski, President, YCCA, Whitehorse, June 1979) The YCCA is presently working with the Department of Human Resources in the hope of seeing the proposed childcare standards legislation passed. The organization is also attempting to work out a proposal with the Yukon government for funding childcare.

A draft ordinance for daycare standards was prepared by Peter McGregor, Supervisor of Community and Family Service, of the Department of Human Resources prior to the territorial elections in late 1978. Following the election, the draft was submitted to the new government with a few modifications. In July 1979, our researchers were told the proposed legislation was to be reviewed in conjunction with daycare centres to "find out what the financial implications are for daycare operators." It would then be returned to the executive committee of the Yukon Territorial Government before introduction in fall 1979.

McGregor commented that the standards set out in the legislation "won't be as stringent as in the provinces because the centres couldn't meet them... It's unwise to restrict the service unnecessarily - just basic health and hygiene - we want the providers to work towards improvement." He expressed concern over parents' lack of involvement in daycare: "I'm not sure a lot of parents are concerned about quality daycare. Most are looking for a cheap baby-sitting service. Parents on the centre boards won't allow the fees to go up." McGregor felt there should be some funding for daycare, as well as legislated standards, from the government. (Interview with Peter McGregor, Supervisor Community and Family Services, Department of Human Resources, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Six of the seven daycare centres in Whitehorse are non-profit centres run by a board of directors: the board generally consists of parents of children who attend the centres. Fees range from $140 to $165 per month. Some centres offer lunch and snacks, others request that children bring their food. All the centres offer regular daytime care, but only one centre takes children who are not toilet-trained. The centres are housed in a variety of facilities including a church basement, trailer or one or two large rooms in a conventional building. All have bathroom facilities. Only one has full kitchen facilities.

The co-director of one of the daycare centres said their centre was set up in accordance with B.C. regulations. Within two months they reached their quota of registrations, and they now turn people away. The centre cares for an average of 27 children each day. Charges are $160 a month or full time care; $120 a month for three days per week;

$80 a month for half days a week; and $10 per day on a drop-in basis. The centre has three full time staff on their busier days, and occupies one large room which contains different activity areas. The co-director commented that it is difficult to find adequate space in Whitehorse, and this has inhibited their plans. She added that the proposed legislation would "give daycare centres a guideline and would give parents half a chance ... Maybe there would be more training for workers." (Interview, Mickey Mouse Daycare Centre, Whitehorse, June 1979)

The YCCA published the 'Family Day-Home Booklet' as a guide for those involved in day-home care. In June 1978, the YCCA produced the 'Family Day-Home Final Report and Recommendations'. Concerns expressed in the final report include: little supervised outdoor activity or play, lack of adequate information on children left by parents, use of corporal punishment, poor nutrition, lack of planned activities and overcrowding. Apparently only a few day-homes issued receipts to parents and most were unaware of how they could operate effectively as a small business. The YCCA has difficulty locating existing family day-homes as users were often hesitant to reveal any information as they feared it might precipitate more enrollment and resultant overcrowding of the facility.

The YCCA recommended immediate adoption of the proposed childcare standards and the employment of a full time family daycare consultant funded by the Yukon government. (Yukon Childcare Assessment and Update Project, 'Family Day-Home Report and Recommendations')

The family day-home operator interviewed by our researchers was concerned that the adoption of childcare standards would limit the number of children she could take into care. At present she has 10 children, aged from two months to four years, in full time care. She also took children for part time and after school care. She charged $150 a month for full time care. Staff consisted of herself, one full time helper (who was paid $14 per day), and teenagers who would help after school. She operated from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and preferred childcare work to office work, her former occupation, and enjoyed working independently.

Women who spoke of the childcare situation in Whitehorse expressed constant worry about having to work, the difficulty in finding adequate care for their children, and the need to monitor such care. The women tried to find the best day-homes and centres for their children, and change sitters when necessary. "I'd prefer to be at home with my daughters," said one woman, but the family needed the extra income her work provided. Since she couldn't be at home she felt she "should be able to find a decent place to leave them." Another woman, expecting her first child, wants to return to work after the birth of her baby. She called all the centres in Whitehorse but found none would take infants. She was considering giving up work and taking in children herself in order to earn some money.

Many informants said two salaries were necessary to keep a household operating in Whitehorse. One woman managed to find satisfactory childcare and took a nursing job. She worked an afternoon shift which made things difficult at home as her husband "didn't like having to make supper and wished I would work any other shift." She added "that particular time we needed the money. It was just too hard to make ends meet on one salary and put a bit away for a house."

The problems encountered by Whitehorse women in arranging childcare are typical of those in most Canadian cities. However, problems in the Yukon are compounded by the lack of standards for childcare operations. Ironically, when and if such standards do come into effect, most of the centres and day-homes will have to increase their rates in order to cover the expense incurred in meeting the standards of staffing levels, facilities, etc. Many women may then not be able to afford daycare for their children unless there is some subsidy of fees.

FORT NELSON

Facilities for childcare in Fort Nelson consist of one playschool, one daycare centre and numerous undocumented private sitters. The Fort Nelson Daycare Society was organized in 1973. It is located in the basement of the Hillcrest United Church, and operates weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. It provides lunch and snacks for the children. As of May 1979 there were 16 children attending the centre full time, others part time and after school. Main problems have been due to fluctuating enrollment, caused in part by women's changing work hours (i.e. shift work) and lack of provincial funding to increase hours of operation to meet women's actual childcare needs.

Some Fort Nelson informants felt larger daycare facilities were needed as "the daycare is crowded". Others felt more money was needed to adequately staff the centre with trained workers. The need for 24 hour daycare was stressed by a number of women as mills operate around the clock in Fort Nelson. "Several women take the better paying jobs at sawmills, meaning shiftwork, and if they are single parents then childcare is a problem," commented one woman. One woman said she had many relatives in Fort Nelson who were able to take her children while she worked. Other women were not so fortunate and had few, if any, relatives in the town and finding childcare could then be a serious problem.

Comments on private, in-home child care reflected a variety of feelings: "Nine out of ten private sitters are unsuitable" and "more regulation of in-home care is needed." However, other women found private care useful, "especially for children under three who are too young to be accepted into the regular daycare centre. In general, Fort Nelson informants preferred group care for their children because the standard of care was better and more reliable than private care. An informant mentioned that few women had the same sitter for more than a few months, and she preferred group care because of the staff's "terrific attitude towards kids,"

(iv) Recreation:

To mothers in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson recreation was an important part of their children's lives, satisfying their children's physical and social needs. The women were well aware of recreation facilities and activities, and many were involved in the organization and maintenance of recreation activities in the community.

The lack of parks and playground areas for preschoolers, the few cultural facilities, and the lack of recreational activities for teens were the main points raised by informants in Whitehorse. The high cost of organized recreation was spoken of: "A lot of people make sacrifices to have their children in figure skating or hockey." One informant felt there were a good deal of recreational opportunities for children, but she had to "limit their participation because of its cost."

Parks and playgrounds were most frequently spoken of in reference to pre-school children. Mothers wanted play areas nearby so young children could play under supervision. The City of Whitehorse Survey and Analysis categorises its parks as tot-lot, neighbourhood, district, city and regional parks. The survey noted that Riverdale is well serviced with tot-lots, and Porter Creek and Crestview may need more tot-lots as subdivisions increase. There is no mention of tot-lots in Valleyview, Takhini and Marwell residential areas. (Stanley and Associates Engineering, 'City of Whitehorse Survey and Analysis, 1976', pp. 26-28) Evidently a study on a parks system plan for Whitehorse is being carried out by the city planner.

Many informants said there was a lack of recreation facilities and activities for teens: "There's nothing for teens to do," was a common statement. Some felt this encouraged juvenile crime as "there's no program for them so they are out on the streets. " Other women felt teenagers "don't want clubs or activities - they want places where they can gather."

The Recreation Director for Whitehorse, Brian Noble, said in an interview with researchers that "it's not fair to say there's nothing to do. Activities exist all over." However, he stressed that athletic and cultural programs couldn't be pushed on teens: "If they don't want to take advantage of them it can't be forced." He felt the best strategy was to maintain communication with them and "wait until they come up with different interests. You have to encourage direct involvement. Teen dances at the recreation centre are something his department tries to organize, and he felt an "under 20's only cafeteria" in Whitehorse would be a success as a "teen hangout". (Interview, Mr. Noble, Recreation Director, City of Whitehorse, June 1979)

Constable Doug Hopaluk, an RCMP officer involved in setting up a street worker program in Whitehorse, told researchers he felt teenagers became involved in petty vandalism to show off and also because they have nothing to do. He also felt the fragmentation of the family and alcohol abuse contributed to the high rate of juvenile crime. There is a "need for more places for the kids to hang out," especially away from the downtown area, and he commented that he would "like to see the pool room open 24 hours a day because the kids scatter after hours onto the streets." (Interview with Constable Hopaluk, RCMP, Whitehorse, June 1979) The juvenile section of the RCMP in Whitehorse was also trying to set up a liason program in the schools with counsellors on vandalism and alcohol.

The 1975 Report of the Recreational, Cultural and Convention Committee of Whitehorse City Council suggested that a large family recreation complex be constructed, thus encouraging more "family-type activities to be made available." ('Recreational,Cultural and Convention Committee Report', p.5) This facility would be particularly useful in the long winters. The report stated:

> "We must plan for the future in such a way as to rid ourselves of the frontier community attitude and take on a more responsible long range, community-spirited attitude so that family living will be less arduous than it is now."
>
> ('Recreational, Cultural and Convention Committee Report', p.4)

Fort Nelson women expressed feelings similar to those of the women of Whitehorse in regard to recreation. Fort Nelson women emphasized the need for parks and playgrounds and the problem of teen recreation. The cost of organized recreation was also noted: many felt that "recreation is for those who can afford it."

Fort Nelson's parks and playgrounds were said to be "distant from populated areas" and facilities were "ill-repaired." Some women said their families utilize school playgrounds but their location "on the hill" was inconvenient, especially for pre-schoolers. Mothers worried about the safety of their children as there were no fenced-in "safe areas" for youngsters in the school playgrounds, and there was often broken glass scattered around.

The East Sub was often mentioned by women interviewed as an area in need of a playground. The Fort Nelson News reported that the Rotary Club was committed to constructing and maintaining a pre-school park in the East Sub if the Village would grade and prepare the site. (Fort Nelson News, May 30, 1970) Apparently this work has now been completed and the park is open.

Women thought there was a lack of teen recreation in Fort Nelson. Some stated that vandalism was caused by "teens with nothing to do. They turn to crime." For teenagers "between the ages of 13 to 17 there just isn't enough for them to do."

It was generally agreed that enough sports activities were available although women did comment that hockey and ice-skating were expensive and winter sports were "too adult oriented." Suggestions for improving the situation included "workshops set up for kids so they can come in and fool around with a motor and so on," "a bowling alley," "a place for kids to do things like play cards or pool," "more tennis and squash courts," and "a community school concept where one school is opened up for evenings for basketball, crafts, etc.."

In both Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women said more entertainment and recreational options should be available for children and teenagers to help prevent involvement with alcohol. "Teens don't have enough to do. They see their parents drink and they drink," was a recurrent comment.

One Fort Nelson informant said she knows "10 and 12 year old alcoholics," and another stated "Alcohol is a big problem. There's too much here and kids get drunk and knocked up."

The considerable extent of alcohol and drug abuse among children and teenagers was also reflected in comments from other community members. John Walsh, a Justice of the Peace in Whitehorse, was reported as estimating that seven or eight minors appeared in court each week on charges of consuming alcohol. He was not aware that the problem was so extensive prior to becoming a Justice of the Peace. (Northern Times, March 30, 1979) The problem was further emphasized by Bill Cline, Chief of the Alcohol and Drug Services in the Yukon. In an interview with researchers he said, "Under-age drinking is a major problem. In 1978, 152 under-age young people had liquor related offenses, including impaired driving." A tragic incident in Whitehorse illustrated the seriousness of under-age drinking: a 15-year old boy died as a result of an afternoon of drinking in April 1979. Corporal Dennis Schlecker of the RCMP said, "Unfortunately, it (drinking) is a very common thing in young people." (Northern Times, May 1, 1979)

Much of the vandalism that occurred in 1978 and 1979 in Fort Nelson has been attributed to teenagers under the influence of alcohol. The problem has been steadily increasing to the point where some students were reported going to school drunk. (Fort Nelson News, January 17, 1979)

Our informants in both Whitehorse and Fort Nelson attribute some of the under-age drinking to the family situation. "Adults are apathetic to teen drinking," said one Fort Nelson woman. She felt family life education including alcohol information, was needed in the school. Another commented that "most homes have it (alcohol) daily so kids think that alcohol is part of growing up." As one

RCMP constable said, when parents have alcohol problems "You get a snowball effect" and end up with juveniles with alcohol problems. (Interview with Constable Hopaluk, Whitehorse, June 1979)

C. Summary - Children:

Our informants made clear they understood the special challenge of living with their families in isolated regions of northern Canada. However, they were concerned about the quality of basic services that their children required. They were not sure their children would receive necessary medical treatment in their communities, they were concerned about the educational opportunities, were dissatisfied with the type and extent of childcare available, and felt recreational facilities could be improved.

When such basic services were less than desirable, or less than necessary, the work undertaken by women in raising their children became more difficult and worrying. The detrimental effects of this were felt not only by the family, but by the community as well.

4.2.3 Summary - Women's Work in the Home

The servicing of family - the provision of food, clothes, housework and emotional support for family members, usually seen as a private service to husbands and children - is seldom considered significant to economic development schemes. Yet, it is women's work in the family that allows their partners to participate in the economic development projects.

There are many components to the work of maintaining the family, including food preparation, care of family members, maintenance of house, yard and car, care of clothing, shopping, household management and maintenance of accounts.

Shopping is one activity crucial to the maintenance of households and women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are particularly concerned about the high cost and low quality of many items, particularly food. Informants say the isolation of their communities is used as a reason for charging higher prices and many, particularly in Whitehorse, are resentful of what they perceive to be a monopoly of the wholesale food supply by one company.

To reduce the effects of high prices and low quality of basic foods, women shop around, substitute other items, go without, garden, preserve their own food, hunt or fish. Single parent mothers and families with marginal incomes have special difficulties meeting basic nutritional needs because of the high cost of food.

The evidence reveals that cost, availability and quality of food do influence the quality of life in the community for as costs increase, the problems increase. The task of home management is worrisome and problematic when there is difficulty in finding and purchasing adequate food for the family to eat.

Women's concerns about the well-being of their partners and children appear in relation to all the issues discussed. Family stability is important to the women of Fort Nelson and the type and availability of employment for their partners is one concern they describe as having an effect on their ability to adequately maintain the family. Many of their husbands or partners work for long periods of time away from home and the adaptation of families' needs and lifestyle to the partner's working condition has a profound effect on family life.

Women know the family's economic survival usually depends on their partner's wages, but they are also aware of the direct link between the large numbers of marriage and family breakdowns that occur in their communities, and the kind of living pattern that many families endure. They see this breakdown being facilitated and aggravated by frequent or long absences of their partner, depression, isolation, loneliness and concern about the needs of their children. It is possible to speculate that living in a northern community such as Fort Nelson or Whitehorse can put a relationship, and a family, "at risk". Informants want the design of much needed family support services to take into account the special needs created by isolation, climatic extremes, and the economic pressures that are prevalent in their towns.

Although many women agree that it is important for them to be raising their children in the north, and away from larger cities, they also agree that difficulties arise because there are few services to meet their children's crises or special needs. Mothers want their children to be safe, healthy and to have good learning opportunities. They worry about situations where children require special medical attention due to crisis or chronic health needs. They are concerned about the negative effect of overcrowded schools on the learning situation for their children, and they want more effective planning undertaken to provide enough schools and qualified teachers. Women are not satisfied with the way the present educational system handles the needs of Indian children, and they feel children with special learning needs due to handicaps and learning disabilities should not have to grow up without those needs being met merely because they live in northern Canada. Fort Nelson women are dissatisfied with the lack of family life education in the schools, they question the experience and ability of many teachers in the community, and want more consideration and investigation made of the relationship between teens, vandalism, and education.

Childcare services and facilities in both communities are inadequate. In Whitehorse many working mothers are angry about the government's lack of involvement in childcare standards and they spend many hours locating childcare and monitoring the care given their children. Fort Nelson women are concerned about the lack of provincial funding available to increase the daycare centre's hours of operation to meet the needs of women doing shiftwork. Some women are unable to avail themselves of well paid shift work in the mills because they are unable to make childcare arrangements for their children.

Mothers in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson see recreation as an important part of their children's lives, fulfilling physical and social needs. The problem areas they define are the lack of park and playground areas - especially for pre-school children - lack of recreational activities to meet the special needs of teenagers, and the high cost of many recreational activities.

As women work in the home to provide the service and support that enables the family to function as a family, we see how this work extends into all parts of the community and its infrastructure. What goes on in the family, when multiplied a thousand-fold, provides the fabric of the community. Family needs are part of community needs and must be considered as planners initiate economic development strategies.

4.3 VOLUNTARY WORK

The participation in voluntary work our informants described touched on all aspects of community life. Women interviewed were involved with church groups, school groups, women's centres, health care, sports associations, business organizations, day care centres and community centres. The fact that a public bus system is operating in Whitehorse is in no small measure due to the voluntary work of members of the Yukon Status of Women Council. The Women's Centre in Fort Nelson operates with volunteer support, and the interest and concern of women of the centre was instrumental in carrying out the research for this report.

The reasons women gave for volunteering their time were as varied as the activities in which they were involved. Some worked as volunteers out of a sense of obligation to the community: "It is important and somebody has to do it," was how one Whitehorse woman explained it. Others said they were working "because of the need for a satisfying activity or to keep busy or involved." Women who were not working outside the home for wages found voluntary work a useful, and sometimes necessary, avenue for community involvement. Women with children frequently helped out in the schools or in scout groups as this was one way they could be involved in their children's activities.

In a report on voluntary action in B.C. it was stressed that voluntary work is of fundamental importance to the quality of life in communities. (Moore et al., p.1) Indeed, voluntary work often substitutes for social services in small towns as the delivery of social services often lags behind economic growth and development. (Ibid., p.126)

Although it is of great benefit to business and community agencies to use the unpaid labour of women, voluntary work often goes unrecognized. Not only is voluntary activity relatively invisible, but it "can readily be ignored or downplayed by those who measure value, power and influence only in terms of money, assets and efficiency." (National Advisory Council on Voluntary Action, p.4)

This undervaluing of voluntary work becomes a real problem for women seeking employment, particularly women who have been out of the paid labour force for a number of years. Employers generally underestimate the value of experiences gained through volunteer work. It is essential that the responsibilities undertaken, skills learned and experience gained through volunteer work be acknowledged and that voluntary work be accorded the higher status it deserves.

Voluntary work helps assimilate new residents into the community and has definite social benefits for the women who undertake it: it also provides essential services to communities. Yet it still goes unrecognized because, as one Whitehorse woman noted, voluntary work is "expected of women." It is part of the work of maintaining home and family.

4.4 WOMEN'S WORK FOR WAGES

4.4.1 Introduction

Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants who worked outside the home did so in order to support themselves and/or their families, to preserve their mental well-being, or for their own career plans. In these northern communities, women's participation in the labour force was even more essential than in other parts of the country. This is due to the higher cost of living in the north and the stresses attributed to the climate and isolation. Such stresses result in the need of women to get out of the home and be involved in the community.

The need to work outside the home is reflected in the percentage of women active in the paid labour force in the Yukon and northeast B.C.. In the Yukon, 58.7 per cent of women are active in the paid labour force. (Jensen, p.2) In northeast B.C., a study of employment in that region revealed that 46 per cent of women in that area were active in the labour force. (Cornerstone Planning Group, p.22) According to figures from a pamphlet entitled, 'Women and Work', distributed by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, women constitute 38.9 per cent of the national labour force, and 47.8 per cent of all women in Canada were working, or looking for work. (Advisory Council on the Status of Women.)

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse face many barriers and difficulties in obtaining employment including inadequate childcare, lack of transportation and little training. These factors, combined with general societal attitudes, have long denied women access to well paid, challenging or prestigious jobs. Women have been restricted to the low-paying service sector and clerical jobs.

In this section of the report, women's work for wages in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse will be examined. Available work opportunities, barriers to employment (particularly lack of training) and problems facing married women and single mothers will be detailed.

4.4.2 Opportunities for Employment

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse reported there were employment opportunities in their towns, but mostly in the traditional women's jobs in the low-paid service sector and clerical areas. Many informants said they had jobs which did not meet their needs and in which there was little opportunity for advancement. "The job doesn't meet my needs. Job opportunities for women in the Yukon are poor. Most good jobs are filled by men. And most clerical workers are women." And, as one informant commented: "Women don't have trouble finding jobs if they're willing to do typical jobs like waitress or bar maid." This view was confirmed by a Whitehorse woman who said, "I had difficulty finding a job that satisfied me when I first came to Whitehorse. There are always jobs available - not appropriate but they're there if you want them."

Surveys and studies confirm the women's statements about the type of jobs available to them. In northeast B.C. an employment survey found that 63.9 per cent of women in the paid labour force worked in clerical, sales or service positions. (Cornerstone Planning Group, p.56) In the Yukon, where the greatest generators of employment are government, mining, tourism and construction, women were clustered in the clerical field in government and the service sector in the tourist industry. Only a small percentage of women were employed in mining and construction. (Jensen, pp.3-10) Throughout Canada, 62.7 per cent of women who work outside the home hold this type of poorly paid and low status job according to the 'Women and Work' pamphlet published by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The cost of living is considerably higher in northern Canada than in the rest of the country, yet wages in the service sector and clerical fields do not always reflect this. One woman, a single mother, reported that she has never been able to earn enough "to have a decent life." Another, a married woman, said, "I wouldn't be satisfied with my salary if I was the sole supporter." The women interviewed spoke of the inadequacy of the salaries paid in their towns and noted that although jobs were available the pay was very poor:

> "Women are poorly paid here, and the working hours are too long."
>
> "The only prejudice is the women's pay cheque. At one job I did the work of three men for the pay of one woman."

In 1979 Canadian women earned on average only 53 per cent of what men earned. (Townson, p.1) This gap helps account for the fact that in 1979, 16 per cent of all adult Canadian women were living on an income below Statistics Canada's poverty line. (National Council on Welfare, p.7)

A few informants thought non-traditional jobs were more accessible to women in the north . They spoke of the visibility of women workers: "Whitehorse appears to be a female work oriented city ... We have a mail lady, there are women bus drivers, city labourers and truck drivers." However, the majority of even non-traditional jobs held by women tended to be routine and low-skilled jobs. One informant noted that women were often hired for these jobs because men don't want them: "The men get bored and quit but women put up with it because they need the job or the money." The wages earned in these jobs are certainly higher than in the traditional women's jobs, but are among the lowest of union wages. Until women are able to obtain training in non-traditional areas, their access to the skilled jobs will be severely limited.

A Whitehorse woman mentioned it was easier for people who had lived in the community for a few years to get a good job. However, another informant said the situation was changing as Whitehorse expanded, and that a proven committment to stay in the town was no longer as important as relevant work experience.

Those women who expressed real satisfaction with their work were mainly young, single women who were relatively short-term residents. A contributing factor to this satisfaction could be that many single women were in the north out of choice whereas most married women were in the north because of their husbands' jobs.

The lack of opportunity in professional, semi-professional and technical jobs was commented upon by many Whitehorse women. Women who were qualified in such fields had difficulty finding jobs which used their skills. Many were either underemployed, or were in a job unrelated to their skills - "filling in time until something comes up," one woman explained. According to Whitehorse informants:

> "There are few career opportunities for women, and few career opportunities for women in the field of business and government. That's men's domain here."
>
> "Professional women may have to wait to find good jobs or they may settle for something out of their field."

Some Whitehorse informants said they came to the town as their husbands had good career opportunities in Whitehorse. However, the women found they could not pursue their own careers or even make use of skills they possessed: "I had difficulty finding a job that satisfied me when I came to Whitehorse. Even if a woman has the qualifications she will likely not get anywhere. There are token jobs available for women."

4.4.3 Barriers to Employment for Women

The lack of adequate training programs and facilities, particularly in regard to non-traditional work skills, was seen as a major problem by women in both towns. The training that was available they felt was unsuited to their needs or was inaccessible. A few Whitehorse women said they were unable to find courses at the local vocational school in their areas of interest. These women reflect the interest of many who would take advantage of career training if it was available.

The inaccessibility of the training programs was criticized by some informants. One woman, a single parent, said, "It's unfortunate that most of the courses at the vocational school are during the day ... I would have to quit my job to go there." Until more flexible programming is instituted, many women's access to training will be limited.

However, two Whitehorse women reported that their training needs were being met. One was frequently sent out of Whitehorse for seminars and courses in relation to her job, and the other woman was able to take a nursing assistant course sponsored by Canada Employment and Immigration.

The Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre is the facility responsible for vocational training in Whitehorse. According to the Principal, John Reid, it is presently "bursting at the seams." Mr. Reid felt training for women in non-traditional jobs was "very accessible." (Interview, John Reid, Principal, Yukon Vocational and Technical Centre, June 1979)

However, as Mr. Reid noted, there is no provision made for childcare at the Centre. The lack of childcare is a significant barrier to women's participation in training programs. A further barrier to women's participation is the manner by which places in the course are allocated. Places are "bought" by Canada Employment and Immigration Centre and the Yukon government who sponsor students. As noted by Jensen in 'Women's Participation in the Yukon Labour Force' this results in problems: women who want training in non-traditional areas are often not a priority for placement in the sponsored courses as they already possess traditional, marketable skills such as typists, clerks, etc.. (Jensen, p.12) In addition, those women who are sponsored and have children are entitled to only $10.00 per week childcare allowance. (Interview, Dan Roberts, Adult Education, YTG)

It is interesting to note that 40 per cent of the inquiries at the Whitehorse Canada Employment and Immigration office concerning industrial or construction employment are from women. (Jensen, p.11) However at the Yukon Vocational and Technical Centre women account for only approximately 1 per cent of the students in the "blue collar" areas. (Jensen, p.13)

When asked about training that would teach skills necessary for employment on the proposed Alaska Highway gas pipeline, Mr. Reid noted that "you would have to go outside for specific training. It's too specialized for us to offer here."

In mid-1979, the Canada Employment and Immigration in Whitehorse sponsored a "pre-trades mini-training course" for women. The course was designed only to introduce women to the various non-traditional training programs available through the Centre, and did not offer any actual apprenticeship training. The course was eventually cancelled and Bev Gosse, Co-ordinator for Women in Canada Employment and Immigration in Whitehorse, identified two reasons for its failure. "The timing was off ... Women did not want to go to school in the summer, or they already had a job," said Ms. Gosse. "Facilities were crowded ... For women to have had access to the machines they would have had to use them after 3 p.m. because of other regular courses in session." (Interview with Bev Gosse, Canada Employment and Immigration, Whitehorse, June 1979)

These factors, coupled with the lack of provision for childcare, and the fact that the course does not ensure further training opportunities or employment effectively prevented the participation of many women who may have been interested in attending training programs at the Centre.

An additional problem women experience is the lack of re-entry training programs for women who have been out of the paid labour force for several years due to family responsibilities. Such women often need to update the work skills they already possess or obtain new skills. They experience severe problems in adapting to a changed labour market and overcoming the barriers common to all women in the labour force. There are no re-entry training programs for women available at present at the Vocational and Technical Training Centre although the Principal, Mr. Reid, did say he soon hoped to initiate courses in the commercial area. (Interview, John Reid, Principal, Whitehorse Vocational and Technical Training Centre, June 1979) Ernie Standish, Director of Canada Employment and Immigration in Whitehorse offered a solution to simplify the problems encountered by women re-entering the labour force: he recommends a pamphlet, offered by the Employment office, as a guide to job hunting, entitled 'Creative Job Search Technique'. (Interview, E. Standish, Director, Canada Employment and Immigration, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Few vocational training programs are offered in Fort Nelson. Northern Lights College provides occasional programs. A truck drivers' training program started in spring 1979 and of 11 people enrolled, two were women. The Women's Studies Advisory Group to Northern Lights College in Fort Nelson also co-sponsored, with the Canada Employment Centre, a women's employment day to introduce women to the options available to them.

One training program functioning in Fort Nelson is a Local Employment Assistance Program (LEAP) to teach office skills to status and non-status Indians. The project has been successful to date, with 60 per cent of the students finding employment. (Interview with Marlene Fanning, Project Director, Dene-thah Project, June 1979)

Another factor identified as a barrier to employment for women was the lack of transportation. This is particularly true in Whitehorse despite the mini-bus system, as the town is so spread out. Women often don't have access to a car, and many already deal with the problem of getting children to day care facilities which may be located some distance from both home and employment. Wekerle and Carter noted in an article on urban sprawl:

> "Women with a double committment to an outside job plus home and children are very conscious of time and distance. More than men, they have to find jobs closer to home, near the transit service and with ready access to daycare and shopping facilities. For many women this means the location of a job may be just as important as pay and opportunities for advancement."
>
> (Wekerle, Carter, p.12)

In response to transport difficulties, Whitehorse initiated a mini-bus system in 1976. Now, as one of our informants noted, "with the mini-bus people can live in the outskirts and get to work, even if they don't have a car - a significant change." Women felt the mini-bus system was good, but that the service should be extended to run at night in order to accommodate people who worked at night.

Their partner's work and attitude were identified by some women as additional barriers to their participation in the paid labour force. A number of Whitehorse women said their partners were out of town for months at a time: when this occurred during the summer months, the family joined him. These women, in order to fulfill their committments to family life, could not take permanent jobs. This situation sometimes created problems for women requiring childcare because, as one woman said, "My need is off and on depending on my husband's work, and so it's even more difficult to find childcare facilities."

A few women mentioned their partners did not approve of them working, although their partners did acknowledge that the extra income earned by the women was helpful. Such an attitude not only created tension between the couple, but the women noted that such non-supportive attitudes always meant they had to take full responsibility for all of the work in the home as well as coping with the outside job.

4.4.4 The Employment Situation for Married Women and Single Mothers

Married women and single mothers in the labour force have to cope with two jobs: running a home and family and working outside the home. Their need to work and their family obligations are difficult to balance, and this creates tension. Mary Pearson in 'The Second Time Around - A Study of Women Returning to the Work Force', analyzes some of the problems faced by women working outside the home:

> "Many of the problems associated with the structure and conditions of women's employment are contingent upon the service they are expected to render at home ... Given

> the heavy unshared burden of family responsibilities, it is not surprising that chronic fatigue is often a problem of working mothers. Also, with the conservative climate of opinion on women in the labour force, a working mother may bear the emotional strain of guilt or doubt, even if her wages are essential to the family or she is supporting her family alone."
>
> (Pearson, p.55)

In order to balance both their work obligations within and outside the home, women often end up taking poorly paid hourly, temporary or part-time jobs. These women benefit the business community in that they provide a pool of eager labour for the low-paying jobs, and employers have no fringe benefits to pay.

Women who re-enter the labour force after a period of working only in the home, or, as mentioned previously in this chapter, in voluntary work, have outdated work skills and little, if any, opportunity to upgrade them:

> "It is probably that large numbers of re-entry women from all occupations work below their ability. All the so-called objective measuring sticks used by employers - recent work experience, work history, references - tend to record the re-entry woman's weakest points and ignore her strengths."
>
> (Pearson, p.17)

In addition, women absent from the work force for some time lag behind in terms of opportunities for advancement, seniority, pension plans, and so forth.

Many of the single mothers and married women interviewed stated they worked because of financial necessity. Single parent families headed by women are among the poorest of all Canadian families. In 1976, 43 per cent of all families headed by women were below the poverty line.

(Townson, p.2) Among two-spouse families, it has been estimated that 51 per cent would fall below the poverty line if wives did not work outside the home. (National Council of Welfare, p.20)

Married women said the high cost of living in the north was why they worked, and augmented their husband's salary:

> "I work because I have to. We need the money to live ... There's no way you can live up here with a family on one pay cheque unless they're making an awfully good salary. Even when my husband is working he makes average wages and that's not enough up here."
>
> "I have to work to help feed the family. In most families in Whitehorse both parents work. I don't know how they do it, with a mortgage to pay, utility costs and food costs if they both don't work."

One salary is simply not sufficient to support these women and their families. However, a few women said they were working in order to get ahead: "We could live on my husband's salary, but if we want any savings I have to work." Another woman commented that when both she and her husband work, "We're able to have a savings account now which we didn't before. We may be able to have enough to buy a house."

The cost of housing was another major factor which caused women to work outside the home. The high cost of building a home, buying a home and paying off a mortgage were all mentioned by the women interviewed: "I work because we need the money to build our new house, and we'll continue to need it to make the payments." One married woman mentioned that they were able to live on her husband's salary but "if we weren't in government housing I'd probably have to work."

Several informants would prefer to devote all their time to their families, but were forced to work outside the home in order to survive economically:

> "I wouldn't work if I didn't have to. I feel that a home-maker is the highest profession any woman can have."
>
> "I don't think it's good for both people to have to work, but there's no way you can do it without two incomes."

The lack of 24-hour childcare presented a definite barrier to women's ability to accept shift work in the mills, Fort Nelson women said. Shift work jobs are better paid, but childcare was extremely difficult to arrange, and prevented many women from even considering such work. Informants did try to fit their work hours with their partner's so that one of them could be home to look after the children. One woman, a Whitehorse nurse, said, "The last job that I had, I worked in the late afternoon and early evening, so my husband was able to look after our boy."

Many women work only part time or on a temporary basis - if such jobs are available - in order to cope with the problem of childcare. Single mothers, who must work to support their families, cannot undertake shift work and so are limited in the type of employment they can accept unless they have friends or relatives who can look after the children.

Several studies have documented the need for adequate childcare for working women. The 'Northern B.C. Women's Task Force Report' concluded the lack of adequate day care in Kitimat made women unable to hold jobs, and was a barrier to women applying for jobs in local industry.

('Northern B.C. Women's Task Force Report', p.30) The 'North East B.C. Coal Employment Survey' determined that approximately one-fifth of the potential work force in that region would require childcare. (Cornerstone Planning Group, p.38) In an address on 'Labour Shortage in Mining' in 1975, Fisher noted that working couples will soon constitute half the work force. In order to attract married women the mining industry may have to make some provisions for childcare:

> "A mining company may have to provide special facilities such as day care centres or allow two women to share one shift. Such practices are relatively new to our industry, but have been used successfully in labour-starved European countries for many years."
>
> (Fisher, p.8)

A Whitehorse woman who currently shares a shift with another woman felt more jobs should be so arranged: "It's an ideal set-up for mothers who want to work or have to work."

Childcare facilities in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse have no provision for infants. This limited women's ability to work outside the home. One woman said, "I called all the daycare centres listed in the telephone book as I want to return to work after my baby is born. None would take infants." If women with very young children have no close friend or relatives to look after the children, their employment options are severely limited for several years. This is especially true if they are single parents. The quality of childcare available was also an issue for working women. "One of the reasons I haven't worked for the past year is the poor childcare facilities. I quit both my previous jobs because there wasn't adequate care for my child." In this community, until adequate and accessible childcare facilities are provided, women with young children face significant difficulties in working outside the home.

4.4.5 Summary - Women's Work Outside the Home

Basic social services are often lacking in small towns, and voluntary services are organized by women as substitutes to meet the needs of the family. These volunteer services include women's centres, childcare societies, and the organizing of recreational and cultural activities. The unpaid voluntary work women do outside the home touches all aspects of community life. However, voluntary work is undervalued by employers particularly with respect to those women who have been out of the paid labour force for a period of time. The fact that voluntary work is often expected of women as part of the work of maintaining home and family may be one of the reasons why the importance of voluntary work goes unrecognized.

Fort Nelson and Whitehorse women work outside the home for wages in order to support themselves, support their families, to preserve their mental well-being or to involve themselves in a career. The barriers they face in obtaining employment include lack of childcare, few training opportunities, lack of transportation and the double responsibility of home and workplace.

Employment opportunities for women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are available in the low paid service sector and clerical areas. Access to better paid, non-traditional work is limited by lack of training and training opportunities. Training that is available is usually inaccessible to women because lack of childcare provision and unsuitable program design does not meet women's needs. As well, the manner in which placements in non-traditional training courses are allocated excludes the participation of women who have traditional marketable skills, such as secretarial work, but want to change their skill area.

Lack of transportation or inadequate transportation creates problems for women who are employed in the paid labour force or are seeking employment. Women with children have difficulty finding a childcare centre close to home or work, and without a vehicle this problem becomes almost unsurmountable. Women praise the Whitehorse minibus system for beginning to solve this problem, but want services extended into the evening to accommodate those women on shiftwork. Some women try to choose their living accommodation close to their workplace in order to get to and from work safely and easily.

Married women and single mothers in the labour force find themselves coping with two jobs: they work outside the home and also maintain a home and family. They work to ensure the economic survival of the family, especially given the high cost of living in northern communities, but often end up taking poorly paid temporary or part time work in order to meet other family obligations.

The lack of adequate childcare presents a major barrier to women's work outside the home. If mothers cannot find childcare they are unable to work. Some, in desperation, settle for less than adequate care. If women are able to find well paid non-traditional work involving shifts, they are unable to locate 24 hour childcare to meet that work need. As a result, many women with children only work part time, or on a temporary basis, in order to cope with childcare problems.

These barriers to employment do not always prevent women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse from seeking and finding employment outside the home. In these communities, women's participation in the labour force is even more essential due to the high cost of living and the stress created by the climate and isolation. However, women do find themselves more available for the traditional low paying service or part time jobs instead of full time work or career committtments that bring in a living wage. Some women feel this employment is, in fact, underemployment and they resent the lack of opportunity or challenge. Single parent women responsible for the support of their family, or women whose partners are modestly paid, find it difficult to survive financially in Fort Nelson or Whitehorse.

The barriers to women's employment makes their home management work more difficult. For some, the eventual decision is to actually remove themselves from the labour market, thus lowering the family income and decreasing their own opportunities in the work world. Other women who cannot afford not to work for wages find themselves in the remarkable double bind of being inadequately paid for work that requires their absence from home and family.

5.0 WOMEN AND THE PIPELINE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse were asked if they thought the proposed Alaska Highway gas pipeline would have any effect on their lives, the lives of their families and the community. Every woman interviewed in the course of this research project already knew of the proposed pipeline development, and researchers found that most were already thinking about the impact of the pipeline.

The women's comments reveal that they know the increased population that results from pipeline construction will affect their communities. They expressed varying degrees of optimism and pessimism about how their community would cope with an influx of what most expect to be male workers. There was considerable comment on the possible impact on women, especially Indian women, of great numbers of single men in town. The desire for community stability, especially in Fort Nelson, led some women to say they hoped workers would bring their families and settle into the community, but concern about presently overburdened infrastructure services added a note of caution.

Anxiety about the high cost of living was voiced by many women. They feared the present inflationary spiral would be exacerbated by the pipeline development. Women mentioned several ways of coping with such inflation, including somehow earning more money to pay for goods, or even moving away from the community. While some said they would be able to afford the higher cost of living, others knew that low, fixed and marginal income people would suffer the most from higher prices. Our informants spoke from the experience of having lived through previous pipeline speculation or development, and they spoke from the daily experience of being residents of northern Cnanda where the recent economic history is one of resource extraction and boom-bust development. Women described their lives in Hay River during the Berger Inquiry; in Inuvik during the construction boom; in Fort Nelson during the 1968-69 pipeline. Those informants who had lived in Whitehorse or Fort Nelson for all or most of their lives detailed the changes brought by Alaska Highway construction and earlier resource development. The comment "resources are here in the north and important to the future of Canada. Fort Nelson in the centre and therefore we will grow," indicates a certain understanding of how Canada views the resource-rich northern frontier.

Opinion about the proposed pipeline development and its impact varied and informants had numerous observations to make, each reflecting their various roles of woman, worker, wife, mother and citizen. Some were clearly in favour of the pipeline construction and stated so in no uncertain terms.

> "I feel the pipeline will be good for the community - i.e. lots of work, maybe cheaper gas, better shopping."
>
> "The pipeline will be good for working people - they will hire anybody."
>
> "What comes after will be beneficial - the development of business and industry."

These women expect the pipeline to bring economic benefit in terms of work for local people, perhaps their own families, and an improvement of local business. However, some expressed strong feelings against the pipeline, feeling that the influx of people and a boom town development would do their communities no good:

> "Forget it, there'll be nothing beneficial

> to the Yukon."
>
> "I am against the pipeline - we don't need another gold rush."
>
> "I don't want the pipeline to go through, we don't need more people."

Others felt either too much attention was being given to the issue or that the pipeline represented progress that, in the long run, they had no control over.

> "If everyone wouldn't make such a fuss over it... likely it would come and go without much effect."
>
> "If it has to be built, it will be built regardless."
>
> "If you want progress you have to give in to something."
>
> "Nothing will stand in the way of its being built."

The majority of responses, however, reflected a tentative attitude towards the pipeline and its impact. Many of the women's comments raised further questions and, in some cases, contradictions about what development of this sort means to people:

> "The pipeline will accelerate a normal trend in economic development. I don't like it. It appeals to me to walk to work and casually go shopping. These things will change. We can't fool ourselves and think Whitehorse will stay a nice little city. It's inevitable."
>
> "The pipeline could be bad...but it could be beneficial."
>
> "I feel the town will have more money, but the majority of the money will be made by outsiders and then taken out of Fort Nelson."
>
> "I'm not against the pipeline but what will happen when the cost of living rises? Will

> Yukoners be able to live on their wages?"
>
> "We will certainly leave if the prices go up so we can't afford to live. I just hope we can sell our house and make a few bucks before we go."

No matter what opinion women held about pipeline construction, nearly everyone expected some kind of change to occur. Not everyone was able to name what that change would be, however, and many just seemed to feel that something was about to happen. They hoped it wouldn't be as bad as they had heard, or as bad as they had seen elsewhere, or as bad as they imagined:

> "Hopefully the pipeline will not change the community"
>
> "The pipeline will go through and it will change family life."
>
> "I don't know what will happen but I hope it doesn't change the north too much."
>
> "Whether or not we stay in Whitehorse depends on the pipeline...we were in Fairbanks this year and it's a mess...We hear lots of stories about the pipeline there."
>
> "Camps for young single men will spring up - what will happen to young women, especially native women?"
>
> "I believe Foothills will try to be careful, that the necessary precautions will be taken to prevent damage from occurring."

Whitehorse informants often observed that pipeline was already having an impact. Women talked about more evident materialism, line-ups in banks and stores getting longer, house values increasing and more people in the town. "It is happening already" was a recurrent comment.

Some women felt "the Indians will be the ones who suffer most", that they had to be given a "fair deal first." Many felt development was inevitable, but wanted it to happen gradually and with preparation. If the development was well planned, some women thought it could be a positive influence.

While some women expressed cynicism about the public hearing process, because "nothing comes of them anyway," many of our informants in Fort Nelson said they would be attending the Northern Pipeline Agency's hearings into the draft terms and conditions planned for late 1979. Women were concerned about the continual pipeline speculation: one said, "we've had a lot of stuff fed to us about the pipeline, now we're beginning to feel we don't know what might happen."

Although many of the women interviewed were not sure what the pipeline companies and government had in store for them, they were emphatic about the fact that there would be substantiial impact upon their communities. The following sections of this chapter were defined by the women as impact areas with which they were most concerned: these include employment of women, employment for family and community, work camps, cost of living, business, education, medical and social services, housing and crime. They also talked about the impact of the pipeline on women, families and the community in general.

Many women took a great deal of time to tell researchers what they thought about the quality of life in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. As much as possible we have let the women's comments speak for them. Not all women spoke to each point, but all concerns they raised are mentioned.

5.2 PIPELINE EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN

"I won't be making the money when the pipeline goes through," said one Fort Nelson woman. For women, the barriers, to employment - especially non-traditional work such as that involved with pipeline construction - are many. Some of the barriers, including limited access to training, inadequate childcare and lack of transportation have been discussed in earlier chapters of this report. Although some of our informants said they might "possibly be looking for work on the pipeline," most did not expect to work on the pipeline or "had not considered it" because of any one, or several, of the barriers mentiond above.

A number of women said they considered pipeline work mainly because of the good wages they could make. However, they know that they will not get those jobs unless they have related skills, and they see no local opportunity for acquiring those skills. These Whitehorse women were explicit in their comments:

> "Physical work appeals to me but there are no training opportunities."
>
> "Pipeline did enter my mind when I first came up here, but those hired will be basically those with trades."
>
> "I feel the pipeline won't offer much employment for women except if they have skills which many women don't."

The comments are not surprising given the fact that women have been historically excluded, except in times of war, from non-traditional employment and the training necessary to qualify for such employment. Jensen's presentation of the barriers facing Yukon women interested in vocational training clarifies the exclusion. Her report, 'Women's Participation in the Yukon Labour Force' states that:

> "In spite of the fact that only a small percentage of women in the Territory are employed in

> non-traditional - particularly blue collar - jobs, a significant number of women have shown interest in this type of employment and are barred from participation because of their lack of specific skills. According to CEIC's Whitehorse office, 40 percent of the inquiries they receive concerning industrial or construction employment are from women."
>
> (Jensen, p.11)

Jensen points out that usually these women already have a marketable skill, i.e. secretarial, and are thus not a priority for placement in CEIC sponsored vocational courses to obtain a new and different skill. Female participation in the Whitehorse vocational school pre-apprenticeship training programs in "blue collar areas" hovers around one percent. Since these trades require several years of training, women who already possess marketable skills "find it difficult to invest the time or the money required to change their field of endeavour." The difficulty is compounded as they cannot get government assistance and the school has no financial provision for non-government sponsored students. (Jensen, pages 12-14)

Thus, women who may have decided to break away from the socialized stereotype of what is considered women's work find that training for non-traditional work is not generally available to them. Even if they are trained, there is no guarantee of employment. The Associate Resource Consultants Ltd. (ARCON) study in northeast British Columbia pointed out that "to date in northeastern B.C., women have not been employed in the field on pipeline work." (ARCON, Vol.V, 1978, page R-110) Furthermore, hiring of local residents is expected to be minimal. The 'Quarterly Narrative Report' (July 1979) from Fort Nelson's Canada Employment Centre stated "West Coast Transmission Jr. Sierra Pipeline...

will be constructed during freeze-up January through March 1980...There will be approximately 300 union jobs and there will be very little recruiting in Fort Nelson. We will be kept busy supplying labour to the spin-off trades." (Greer, p.1)

Training and employment opportunities for the pipeline have been addressed by the Northern Pipeline Agency, responsible for ensuring federal government legislation and policies (including the Federal Human Rights Act) are respected in company plans for pipeline construction. Draft terms and conditions put forward by the Northern Pipeline Agency have included requirements for the Company "to develop Opportunity Measures Plans designed to provide full opportunity to those who have traditionally have been at a disadvantage in obtaining certain types of work or engaging in certain types of enterprise." Furthermore the "company will also be expected to propose measures aimed at opening opportunities for women to participate in pipeline training and employment, and will be required to provide suitable accommodation and other facilities and services that may be required to ensure such opportunities." (Northern Pipeline Agency, Socio-economic terms and conditions, Draft 11, North B.C., 1979 p.2).

Despite the good intentions of the terms and conditions, it is apparent from our interviews with women of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse that they are still unclear about who will provide training programs for pipeline jobs, or indeed if any training will be provided. They are also not sure if any jobs will be available for them.

The Yukon Status of Women Council asked for clarification on these points in their presentation to the terms and conditions hearings held in Whitehorse in the spring of 1979:

> "Under Section 1 the company will be required to implement an Opportunity Measures Plan. Under this plan it will 'establish facilities and conditions necessary to enable interested and qualified women to take advantage of employment and business opportunities'. Paragraph 4 states 'Foothills will ensure women have full access to job opportunities.' These statements imply that if qualified women are available they will be given equal consideration. However, it does not address the problem of how women become qualified. What action will be taken to ensure women are equally competitive? This is a fundamental question that affirmative action must address. Under Implementation it does state that 'The Company will also be expected to propose affirmative measures aimed at opening opportunities for women to participate in pipeline training and employment and business...'. These measures should clearly and specifically address how qualification requirements are applied, and why they tend to screen out many women. Assuming that Foothills is now at work on these plans, we would like to hear from them what the objective of their Opportunity Measures Plan for women is."
>
> (Yukon Status of Women
> Council, Brief to
> NPA-EARP public hearings,
> Whitehorse, April, 1979)

There has been a series of meetings planned between Foothills and the Yukon Territorial Government on job training for long term and construction phase jobs on the pipeline. The Yukon Advisory Council to the Northern Pipeline Agency has stated they are concerned about job training plans. (Northern Times, May 23 and May 28, 1979). However, the questions raised by the Yukon Status of Women Council have not yet been answered.

Mim Dixon's descriptions of the training and employment situation around the Alyeska pipeline in Alaska shows the consequences of the lack of early training opportunities, even when affirmative action legislation is in force. In her study, "What Happened to Fairbanks? The Effects of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline on the Community of Fairbanks, Alaska" - one of the very few studies of the impact of pipeline construction on a community - Dixon reported:

> "Few Alaskans possessed the skills for many of the pipeline jobs when the construction project commenced. This enabled Alyeska Pipeline Service Company President E.L. Patton to assert in December 1974, 'We have not been able to find a qualified Alaskan who didn't get a job on the pipeline if he wanted it.' Because of the timing and voluming of the training programs, there simply weren't many qualified Alaskans to be hired."
>
> (Dixon, p.60)

Most women hired for Alyeska pipeline work were in clerical positions. However, the number and percentage of women in the pipeline workforce did increase over time, and Dixon suggests that "prior planning, training and enforcement could have enabled more minorities and women to take advantage of pipeline employment over a longer time span." (Dixon, p.77)

If the pipeline companies building the Alaska Highway gas pipeline are serious in their statements about the number of jobs available for northerners, and if the Northern Pipeline Agency is serious about its legislated mandate to approve and monitor the Company's compliance with the terms and conditions, one would presume that, unlike the situation in Fairbanks, women would have an early opportunity to consider and be trained for pipeline work if they so desire. Access to well paid pipeline work will insured first by adequate qualifications, then by a union card and lastly by non-discriminatory hiring practices.

Although most Alaskan women did not find work on the actual pipeline, they did find increased opportunities in the usual low paying, entry level positions in the clerical and service sector of the economy. "In the context of high turnover rates during the pipeline construction, local people who normally had difficulty finding jobs become more desirable as employees," states Dixon. (Dixon, p.161) Teenagers, the mentally and physically handicapped and women who wanted to work part time were included in this group of people who became desirable as employees.

Our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse expected to find more clerical and service sector employment open to them as well. Clercial work, waitressing, hotel work were the kinds of jobs they felt the pipeline would bring for women in their community. This point of view was also expressed by the local Canada Employment and Immigration Centre (CEIC) in Whitehorse and indicates the Centre's understanding of what will be available for women seeking pipeline work. Mr. Standish of the Whitehorse CEIC, told our researchers he saw much work stemming from the pipeline but it would be "at the Bay, Hougen's, shops at the mall." (Interview with E. Standish, Canada Employment and Immigration, Whitehorse, June, 1979.)

In a period of economic difficulty, few women would say that the menial and low-paid jobs weren't wanted. However, the fact remains that women take those jobs because they are the only jobs available to them. Despite the best statements of industry and government, it is clear that women "won't be making the money when the pipeline goes through."

5.3 PIPELINE EMPLOYMENT FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

The two major issues raised by our Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants in regard to pipeline employment for family and community, were local hire and the effect of the pipeline on other employers in the community. The issue of local hire was raised mainly in Fort Nelson. Unlike the draft terms and conditions for the Yukon, the northern British Columbia draft terms and conditions do not specify that northern residents should have first preference in hiring, nor do they define a northern resident. The Whitehorse informants were concerned about the effect on the present Yukon labour force of preferred hiring for northern residents.

Women talked about the possibility of pipeline employment for members of their family. Some women said their husbands or sons were expecting to find pipeline work, others said their husband's business would benefit from spin-off effects of pipeline construction. Some stated that no one in the family would be involved in any kind of pipeline work, while others said it was "under consideration."The following quotes are representative:

> "The pipeline is very much on my mind as my husband expects to work on it."
>
> "If we are here when it goes my husband might work on it."
>
> "My husband sees a possible expansion in his business with the purpose of making money and capitalizing on the pipeline."
>
> "It may provide employment for our two sons."
>
> "I don't expect anyone in the family to work on the pipeline."

One woman in Fort Nelson also said that her 17-year old nephew had called from Ontario to ask if he could stay with her while he looked for pipeline work. Another commented that during the 1968-69 pipeline construction in northwest B.C. her brothers and two brothers-in-law lived with her and worked on the pipeline. Her husband also worked on the pipeline.

Conjecture about the proposed pipeline construction has an effect not only on the economic structure of the community, but as subsequent sections of this chapter will show, affects domestic life as well. The economic survival of the community and family are inextricably intertwined, and decisions about economic development involving employment opportunities have a crucial effect on the survival of home and family in a community.

The prevailing view of Whitehorse informants, when asked about employment for local people, was that "banks, restaurants and small businesses will be hit hard in terms of keeping staff." An employer in the mining town of Faro, Y.T., stated "I stand to lose all of my key people and the major part of my work force to the pipeline" when he addressed the NPA-EARP public hearings into the draft terms and conditions in spring 1979.

Local employment problems were a major and unexpected impact of the Alyeska pipeline construction in Alaska in the mid-1970s. In her review of the situation in Fairbanks during that construction, Dixon stated:

> "Local employment problems may be attributed to several factors: (1) as the community expanded more local jobs are created; (2) more local people sought pipeline jobs than had been anticipated; (3) people who came to Fairbanks did not feel the local employment needs (as) the cost of living in Fairbanks was so high that many in-migrants could not afford to work at the lower-paying local jobs and... those who took local jobs did so on a temporary basis, which created exceptionally high turnover rates."
>
> (Dixon, p.159)

According to Dixon, employers developed several strategies for handling high turnover rates. These included the reduction of services; increased wages and benefits to make non-pipeline jobs more attractive; the development of intensive training programs to reduce the mistakes and ineffeciency of new employees; and the recruiting of employees from other geographical areas. (Dixon, p.161) These tactics cost the employer money, reduce services available to citizens and bring in more workers from outside the community. It's no wonder that an official of the Canada Employment and Immigration Centre in Whitehorse told our researchers that he hoped those people already employed who might be interested in pipeline employment would "consider long hours, camps away from their families and compare that to their present stable existing employment." (Interview with Mr. Standish, CEIC, Whitehorse, June 1979) The assumption, held by many people, that development such as this pipeline will automatically bring more services and better employment to communities such as Whitehorse and Fort Nelson must be re-examined.

In Fort Nelson, the issue of local hire of pipeline workers was foremost in women's minds. Informants worried about an inundation of workers from other parts of the country, and often commented that they wanted money made in the area to be spent there - not taken out by the transient workers when they left.

Their comments reveal their concern, and also some solutions:

> "I'd like to see skilled workers hired locally first and unskilled local labour given training on the job if feasible."
>
> "Pipeline workers will be outsiders up here for the bucks."
>
> "A residency requirement is a must or else we will get waves of rejects here like Fort St. John."

> "There should be qualified local hire first, then southerners - and a residency requirement."
>
> "There should be a two year residency requirement and a person contracted to stay a certain length of time on the job."

A few women indicated they already knew that hiring would not include local people. They commented "you have to be a high-baller to build the pipeline and if you're not, you can forget it," and "it would be good if local people get jobs but they usually bring their own crews." A number of women said that if workers came they should bring their families and settle permanently to encourage community stability. However, they also wondered how the community could cope with such an increase in population.

Our informants also told us that "people are already here looking for pipeline work. They can't get work elsewhere because of unemployment." The Fort Nelson Women's Centre Brief of March 1978 to the parliamentary committee reviewing the Northern Pipeline Bill reported that a dozen men were sleeping on cots in the church basement because of lack of accommodation. They came looking for work and have nowhere to live. (Fort Nelson Women's Centre, 1978, p.2)

In an article on the oil and gas boom in the Peace River area, the Northern Times reports "a steady stream of job hunters still flows (to Fort St. John) from elsewhere in Canada. They're seeking oil-patch jobs and the rumoured accompanying riches...but the local Canada Manpower Office usually places few job-seekers with the oil contractors who tend to hire on their own in the industry." (Northern Times, 5 February 1979)

Clarification on the number of pipeline construction workers needed in northeast B.C. was provided by the Northern Pipeline Coordinator of Westcoast Transmission Company, Al Green, in an address to the Canadian Information Processing Society in March 1979. He said that at the peak of construction, 2100 men would be involved in the construction of the B.C. segment of the line and that 50 per cent of that trade labour force would come from the province. The remainder would be from outside B.C. Green estimated approximately 400 men, less than 40 per cent of the B.C. labour force required for the project, would be drawn from the Peace River area, and said no employment would be offered or given to casual job seekers who came into the area.

The draft terms and conditions formulated by the Northern Pipeline Agency for northern B.C. admits that the control of speculative job-seekers is a problem, but states "it is felt the company can adopt measures which will minimize the number of unnecessary transients but at the same time will not curtail access for these potential employees." (Northern Pipeline Agency, Socio-economic terms and conditions, Northern B.C. segment, Draft III, 1979, p. 9) Apparently Foothills will be required to "establish a procedure whereby non-northeastern British Columbia residents are hired outside of that area, and shall conduct an advertising program to notify potential employees of hiring location."

Some of our informants wondered if this meant a roadblock would be erected on the Alaska Highway to warn job-seekers not to proceed unless they had work.

Newspaper articles relate that "Foothills Pipe Line (South Yukon) Ltd. still faces negotiations with unions involved in the construction of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline before the policy of preferential Yukon hiring is finalized." A former acting administrator for the Northern Pipeline Agency told the same reporter that "building trade unions in the south now have a surplus of qualified workers and are trying to look out for the best interests of their workers before hiring on additional employees." (Northern Times, April 6, 1979)

From all the above, it is difficult to determine who can be hired, who will be hired and where hiring will take place. It is also hard to discern how in-migrants will be discouraged, what job provisions there will be for transients who arrive seeking pipeline spin-off employment. In addition, what will happen to local employers if they lose present employees to the pipeline remains unresolved.

5.4 PIPELINE IMPACT ON EDUCATION, MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Previous chapters of this report have described the provision of education, social service, medical and mental health services to the communities of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Gaps in service have been outlined by our informants and by representatives of those services. When questioned about the effect of pipeline construction on the community, all of our informants stated that more services would be needed to mitigate or minimize problems brought by such development. Many women felt the combination of big development, big money and a small town would create a strain - especially on the family - that would have to be dealt with by the educational, medical and social services. Their comments illustrate some of the problems:

> "With the pipeline coming we need more birth control and VD information."
>
> "We will need more doctors and a larger hospital."
>
> "Facilities are already overloaded."
>
> "Demands for daycare will increase."
>
> "Schools will be more crowded."
>
> "There is a lack of facilities now - what will happen with the influx?"

> "There will be increased psychological problems with people being caught in this development wondering how they fit into the changes."

The most common feeling expressed was that there weren't sufficient services for the community at present. The women worried that large scale development would overrun the present services. Some worked in agencies and groups involved with such community services, and they felt changes were already occurring due to pre-pipeline impact.

The Whitehorse mental health nurse, Sharon Roe, the only mental health nurse for the Yukon, said mental health problems and marriage breakdown would be exacerbated by financial stress caused by an increase in the cost of living brought by pipeline construction. She talked about a "change in values" brought by "the big money that will be made" and felt it would be necessary to have the support services of a transition house and additional family services. She expects an increased case-load from mental health offices in Whitehorse, but knew of no plans to hire extra staff.

Dixon's study of the pipeline impact in Fairbanks reveals there was an increased need for counselling services during pipeline construction. The Alaska State Mental Health Clinic admitted 40 to 50 per cent more new clients during the pipeline period. Dixon notes that:

> "According to the clinic staff, the caseload did not represent newcomers to the community. The increased caseload might be attributed to Fairbanksans experiencing stress from changes in the community, challenges with changing values, or confronting different decisions than they had made before."
>
> (Dixon, p.211)

She adds that "stress in the community did not manifest itself with any specific symptoms. According to the clinic director, "we are seeing more of everything which we saw before." (Dixon, p.213)

The Fairbanks Crisis Line reported an increase in crisis calls at their office during pipeline construction. Apparently "more than five times as many people called Crisis Line in suicide-related contacts in spring of 1975 than during the same period of 1973." However, there was a decline in the percentage of calls received from people who were lonely and wanted to talk with someone. (Dixon, p.213)

Child abuse, wife beating and increased drinking were mentioned by our informants as current problems that they expect will increase with large scale development. The Yukon Indian Women's Association (YIWA) presented a transition house funding proposal to the federal Deparment of Health and Welfare in March 1979. YIWA outlined numerous instances where the services of a transition home were needed for the protection of women and children, and stated "both native and white women stand to be adversely affected by the pipeline and Shakwak projects...with the influx of construction workers and those lured by stories of quick money, the need for a women's transition home will be increased dramatically." (YIWA, p.2) According to Dixon, child abuse cases did not actually increase during pipeline construction, but social workers reported the type of cases changed somewhat, becoming more severe and complicated. In addition, there was a reduced number of foster homes and other facilities in which to place children in need of protective custody. (Dixon, p.214) Liquor sales increased 51 per cent during pipeline construction although Dixon notes that it was impossible to determine to what extent this may have been due to population increase, affluence and drinking patterns or mental health problems. (Dixon, p.215)

Virtually all our informants felt that more medical services and facilities would be required during pipeline construction, but opinion varied among medical officials in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Dr. Kenyon in Fort Nelson felt that the pipeline's effect on medical facilities would depend on the number of families that moved into the area. He said the medical staff at the hospital had not been approached by either the Northern Pipeline Agency or the pipeline company about pipeline health care plans. (Interview, Dr. Kenyon, Fort Nelson, June 1979) The administrator of the Fort Nelson General Hospital, Mr.Tarney, estimated that as the usual requirement is four hospital beds per 1,000 population, the 41-bed hospital could service at least 9,000 people. He estimated the present summer population at 5,500; an additional 3,800 people arrive each winter for oil rig and logging work. (Interview with Mr.Tarney, Fort Nelson General Hospital, June 1979) The estimated pre-pipeline winter population therefore, is 9300 people, a figure over what Mr.Tarney stated the present hospital facility could service.

The director of the Department of Health for the Yukon territorial government, Tom Duncan stated that "the pipeline will accelerate normal growth." He held Foothills responsible for a certain level of medical service for workers, including workers not covered by the government's health plan. At the time of his interview with researchers, his department had not had any meetings with Foothills. (Interview with Tom Duncan, Whitehorse, June 1979)

The administrator of one of the medical clinics in Whitehorse, Mr. Pollack, reported he had surveyed medical facilities in Fairbanks, and made a presentation to Foothills. However, he had not heard from them in a year. (Interview with Mr. Pollack, Whitehorse, June 1979) The regional director of the Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada, Mr. Avison, said he had been working with the pipeline co-ordinator in the Yukon government on the expected impact of the pipeline upon the health system. Avison commented that he is "mainly concerned with the small communities where the dramatic changes will occur... Whitehorse has an excess capacity in the hospital and number of doctors." (Interview with Mr. Avison, Whitehorse, June 1979)

One of the unexpected impacts of the pipeline construction in Fairbanks was a change in the power structure of the health care industry. Prior to pipeline construction, most of the private physicians practiced in either of the two medical clinics in Fairbanks. As construction began more physicians came to the town to practice independently, and many clinic physicians broke away from the clinics to practice independently. Previous inter-clinic competition for patients decreased, and clinics received contracts for pipeline companies pre-employment physicals and union medical plan services, making clinics less dependent on individual patients. The physicians not affiliated with the clinics concentrated on serving the local population. Dixon reports that by 1976 there were 57 private physicians in Fairbanks, representing 12 specialties.

Hospital utilization in Fairbanks changed during pipeline construction as more types of surgery were performed in the north instead of being referred to southern cities such as Seattle. Injured pipeline workers were evacuated directly to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital rather than being airlifted further south: from May 1, 1975 to April 30, 1976, a total of 1,283 medical emergencies were sent to Fairbanks Hospital from pipeline camps, an average of 3.5 medical evacuations per day. (Dixon, p.155) In addition to pipeline evacuation cases, the emergency services room of the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital was highly utilized by people in need of alcohol detoxification and newcomers to Fairbanks who did not have a family doctor. Those factors meant the hospital, which had been thought adequate to cope with pipeline impact as its occupancy rate was only 67.7 per cent in 1974, was overcrowded. The hospital had difficulty dealing with demands for its services, and Dixon notes:

> "To cope with the demands for in-patient health care doctors moved patients out of the hospital a little faster than before, used the extended care facilities of a local private convalescent home and delayed elective surgery."
>
> (Dixon, p.155)

The Fairbanks experience shows that despite the presence of many more doctors and specialists, inappropriate planning for pipeline impact meant local residents received less medical attention than before.

The draft terms and conditions for northeastern British Columbia require that "through consultation with the government of British Columbia, Foothills shall ensure that proper facilities are provided for the care and treatment of ill and injured workers." Foothills, in its implementation of this term and condition, is to "ensure that their requirements will not cause undue disruption to services for local residents." The terms and conditions for the Yukon state a similar requirement.

From an understanding of what happened in Fairbanks, from the descriptions of present and planned medical services in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse, and from the very general term and condition placed on Foothills, it is most likely that medical services for residents of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse will be inadequate during the pipeline construction period. Furthermore, this inadequacy will probably first affect community residents who are not working on the pipeline.

There has been ongoing debate in Fort Nelson and

Whitehorse over how many pipeline workers will bring families with them when they come to work on the pipeline. This concern has been related particularly to the need for education facilities. In Fairbanks, the anticipated increase in school enrolment did not occur, mainly because only one out of every 97 persons hired to work on the pipeline brought a family with school age children with them. (Dixon, p.105) However, the principal's monthly reports for the middle and elementary schools in Fort Nelson already show an enrolment increase in the winter months when extra oil rig and logging activity is occurring. This indicates that some men are bringing their families to Fort Nelson and utilizing the schools, even if only for five months of the year. (Principal's Monthly Reports, School District 81 - 87, monthly reports May 1978 and May 1979) The Fort Nelson School Board secretary-treasurer told our researchers that the pipeline has been discussed by the board several times, but there were no specific plans to handle pipeline impact on the school system.

There are several points to take into account when considering the potential impact of pipeline construction on schools in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. First, as both of these communities are more accessible from the south than Fairbanks it is easier for people to consider bringing their family and household goods with them. Second, there is no northern resident preference clause in the draft terms and conditions for northeastern British Columbia, and this should be considered as an attraction to workers and possibly their families as well.

5.5 PIPELINE IMPACT ON COST OF LIVING

From earlier chapters of this report we have learned that the cost of living in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse is already higher than in many other parts of Canada. What has also become apparent is the direct effect of this high cost of living on women responsible for family servicing and maintenance. One of the major concerns about pipeline impact stated by our informants was the additional increase in the cost of living that they felt pipeline construction would bring.

Our informants raised this worry - and responded to it in a number of ways. Many of the women interviewed said the pipeline would mean "prices will go up and wages won't ...the cost of living will raise, and renters will lose out." As well, they pointed out that as "prices escalate... those on a fixed income will be at a disadvantage." Some felt their families would be able to manage, and commented that "we can control how impact affects us" but everyone wondered how great the increase in the cost of living would be and what would happen to those on low or fixed incomes.

One of our informants, a single parent, is making what could be a marginal income in Whitehorse. She said "if things get too expensive we'll just have to leave." For this woman, moving would mean uprooting herself and her two children from Whitehorse - her home of eleven years.

There were reports that some people were already utilizing the expected boom. One woman said "friends are building a big house so they can sell it to some pipeline executive" and women noted that "land prices have shot up due to speculation." Whitehorse women in particular noted that "people are speculating in the housing market."

Although no accurate measure of inflation in Fairbanks during the pipeline construction period is available, there were some indications of increases in consumer prices. Dixon reports that "a food price survey conducted by the Impact Information Centre showed a 12.3 per cent increase in food prices in Fairbanks from January 1975 to January 1976, a period in which the nation (U.S.) as a whole experienced a 6.5 per cent increase in food prices and Anchorage had a 4.2 per cent increase." (Dixon, pages 36 - 37) Other effects of the high cost of living were higher costs to government for capital expenditures, cost of living adjustments for government employees, increased wages in government and business in order to keep pace with high pipeline wages, increased land values and subsequent increases in property tax assessments. (Dixon, pages 37 - 38)

The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) of the University of Alaska conducted a survey on the impact of oil development in Fairbanks. On the list of the "ten worst community assessments" for Fairbanks, respondents considered the high cost of living to be the worst problem, despite the rapid rise in household incomes in Fairbanks. (ISER, p. 11) The survey also inquired about family changes that have resulted from the tremendous growth in Fairbanks: 13 per cent of the respondents felt they were better off with more economic opportunity. Fourteen per cent said they were worse off: their jobs had not kept up with inflation and one of the results was they had to add another income earner to the family. (ISER, p. 7) Women who seek to add another income to their family face the added problem of finding quality child care, which constitutes a barrier to employment.

Another effect of the pipeline in Fairbanks, Dixon notes, was that "during the pipeline period a new type of needy family emerged in Fairbanks. These were families which had never received public assistance or other state social services. While their income levels were too high to qualify for public assistance and they were too proud to seek such services, they were suffering from accelerated inflation which created financial hardships." And "even those who did qualify for public assistance and sought that type of aid found it be inadequate." (Dixon, p.148)

Our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse felt an increase in the cost of living would be one of the first hardships they and their families would feel from pipeline impact. They knew, that at the very least, they would just have to "stick it out" and if it came to the worst, they would have to leave the community.

5.6 PIPELINE IMPACT ON BUSINESS

In terms of the pipeline's impact on business, our informants hoped present business services would expand and that more business would be attracted to the community. This was seen as a definite benefit of pipeline construction. However, they also feared that the demand for business services would be more than the towns could handle, and that present services might become less dependable and even more crowded.

In Fort Nelson numerous women said they "hoped more businesses will be coming" but also wondered if they would "pull out when construction is finished." While they want their local businesses to have more competition and think that the pipeline "will help the town grow business-wise", they also wondered if "a more professional type of person would be coming up and small town Joe would lose business" as a result. Many noted that there were already long line-ups at the bank and fewer parking places downtown.

Similar comments came from women in Whitehorse. One woman said that the "increase in the number of people in the past year is noticeably affecting shopping" and wondered what it would be like with even more people. Although some felt that "businesses would probably change financially for the better" others worried that "small businesses would suffer if the pipeline takes away local workers" and that "shortages might occur." Fort Nelson research team staff noted that a boom is already being felt there due to recent economic developments. The Village Office of Fort

Nelson reported that 285 business licenses were issued in the first six months of 1979 compared to 232 licenses issued in the 12 months of 1978. A new shopping plaza is being planned, a small office building is opening, a flooring store recently doubled in size, another 100 unit motel was to be opened in the winter of 1979 and a new shoe store opened during the summer. Of three new business owners interviewed by our researchers, two said they came to Fort Nelson because they had heard it was "a growing place." However, all three said their business opening was hampered by high rents and lack of available business space. Another businessperson interviewed said when she enquired about renting space in the new mall she was told that a store of the size she wanted would cost her $4,300 a month. She presently pays $800 per month.

Interviews with members of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce indicate, contrary to popular opinion, that local businesses might not take advantage of the boom to expand. Mr. Flynn, manager of the Chamber of Commerce, noted that "most intelligent business people are not allowing a possible boom to affect their business planning... businesses will have to let some money walk by the door because they can't afford to finance once the boom is over." (Interview with , Mr. D. Flynn, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, manager, June 1979) This was echoed by a food store manager who noted that the pipeline "doesn't come into our plans. It won't affect business to the extent people say." (Interview, Mr. D. Palamar, Food Fair, Whitehorse, June 1979) Kelly Douglas suppliers said they have "no plans for the future, we're in business now and have the facilities to accommodate pipeline impact." (Interview, Mr. Eby. Kelly Douglas, June 1979)

Dixon reported that local businesspersons in Fairbanks tended to view growth in terms of "profits rather than assets" during pipeline construction years. She noted that "this type of short term thinking assumed they could maximize their profits by minimizing their expenditures for such things as taxes and capital expenditures." (Dixon p.135) She concluded that "inherent conservatism in the economic political structure of the community and ideological conservatism of some leaders helps to explain why the community's infrastructure was not expanded before and during pipeline period to accommodate the increased demands." (Dixon, p.138)

In Fairbanks this lack of planning for increased demand resulted in long line-ups at most stores, fewer goods available, and increased traffic congestion (which produced more ice-fog pollution). These are the same problems women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are already noticing and they believe will worsen. The projection that the pipeline will bring a better selection of business goods and services to Fort Nelson and Whitehorse is misleading, and may well prove untrue.

5.7 PIPELINE IMPACT ON HOUSING

Fort Nelson and Whitehorse informants were concerned that present housing problems, already identified as a major issue of concern, would be exacerbated by pipeline construction. Fort Nelson women felt "planning should start now because there is such a shortage of houses and apartments."

Whitehorse is not experiencing Fort Nelson's current housing shortage and Whitehorse women felt that developers would not want to build houses aimed at the short term pipeline market. They felt the effect "may be to raise rents unless there is some control." Many commented on recent increases in the cost of housing and felt "the inflationary trend was due to pipeline speculation."

The housing shortage created by the influx of prospective pipeline workers to Fairbanks was such that the state Commissioner of Commerce conducted public hearings, declared a housing emergency and eventually set up a rent review office. The housing problem was accompanied by a shortage of lots with water and sewer connections on which to develop housing. In addition, little money was available for apartment financing. (Dixon, p.126)

Dixon's study reports that "builders tended to construct speculative housing which was overpriced in comparison to housing needs." The result was that "faced with little rental housing and affordable housing for sale many people living in Fairbanks opted for less conventional housing. Some chose to cope with the high cost of housing by obtaining higher paying jobs, such as pipeline employment, and/or for spouses who had not previously worked to enter the labour force." (Dixon, pages 127-128) One of the eventual solutions to the housing problem in Fairbanks was to bring in "mobile homes crammed close together to minimize the cost of providing utilities to the lots in the mobile home courts" (Dixon, p.128). However, even that solution didn't evolve until well into the pipeline construction period.

Our informants indicated that families and individuals in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are already struggling to meet housing costs. Fort Nelson is having difficulty meeting, the current housing demand. One Fort Nelson woman said although pipeline workers would live in the camps "the families will live in town and facilities will be inadequate."

In a letter to the editor of the Fort Nelson News, the Fort Nelson-based Northern Development Association pointed out that "now there is open admission that indeed all workers will not be accommodated in camps, and that arrangements for temporary accommodation in trailer courts will be negotiated with CMHC and provincial housing authorities." The letter commented that Fort Nelson residents seemed to hear about decisions concerning them only after the decision had been made, and stated "we are most concerned with social impact of these developments in a community that is already experiencing housing shortage." (Fort Nelson News, 6 December, 1978)

The draft terms and conditions do state that Foothills' Housing Plan must take into account the needs of permanent and temporary workers on the pipeline. However current residents of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are concerned that they may be the ones to suffer most from the pipeline's impact on the local housing market.

5.8 PIPELINE IMPACT ON CRIME

The annual report (1977-78) of the Corrections Branch in Whitehorse stated that "given the current sentencing pattern and the expected rise in crime rate during the pipeline era, it is evident that the present facilities cannot hope to deal adequately with the situation for much longer... if the Yukon is to avoid similar problems (to Alaska) we must respond to the early warning signals and begin preparations now for an expansion in correctional services." (Yukon Annual Report,Department of Justice, Corrections Branch, 1977-78, p.6)

This concern was shared by our informants in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. Most women expected that "crime would increase in every area" due to pipeline impact. Some noted that "there is already an increase in drunk drivers and assault" which they attributed to "newcomers coming for work." Vandalism was often mentioned as a current problem and expected to increase, perhaps caused by "drifters with no source of income" attracted by the excitement of large scale development such as the Alaska Highway gas pipeline.

A number of women said "there will be more organized crime such as drugs" and "more professional-type crimes." A Whitehorse woman said when she was working for the bank "the RCMP showed us slides because they expected a bank robbery if the pipeline went through - they were training us to deal with robberies." RCMP staff in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse expressed varying opinions as to the type and amount of criminal activity they anticipated as a result of pipeline impact. When interviewed by our researchers in Whitehorse, Sergeant Levy, responsible for crime prevention and community relations and native policing, indicated that their detachment's staffing increase would be insignificant over normal growth. However, he said the department would change priorities as they saw fit.

A constable presently involved with programs for juveniles commented that although he felt undesirable people would be coming to town during the pipeline preiod, he hoped that "people would be sensible." He indicated that he understood those hired from outside would have to stay in the camps, and he hoped that welfare would set a strong policy of "no assistance" to drifters. (Interview with Constable Doug Hopaluk, Whitehorse RCMP, June 1979)

The acting chief probation officer of Whitehorse, Mr. Kim Zapf, said "I anticipate an increase not in violent type of crime, but rather an increase in the already popular crimes - assault, breaking and entering, vandalism." (Interview, Acting Chief Probation Officer Zapf, Whitehorse, June 1979)

Sergeant Blair of Fort Nelson's RCMP detachment felt the area's recent expansion had caused an increase in crime over the past year. When asked about pipeline impact, he commented that workers would be in self-contained camps during construction, and that few would remain permanently. He added that he felt the Sierra and Liard roads would have more effect on Fort Nelson because when they are completed the town would be a main supply site for the area. He told interviewers that his staff would increase by two in 1980. (Interview, Sergeant Blair, RCMP Fort Nelson, June 1979)

There was a significant increase in almost every category of crime during the pipeline construction period in Alaska, and there has been considerable discussion over whether or not the increase was due to organized crime or "disorganized crime attributable to general population increases and alcohol related incidents." (Dixon, p.189) As well, there were serious staff shortages in the police force due to lucrative pipeline security jobs that lured many officers away. Eleven of the thirteen officers who resigned from the Fairbanks Police Department in the first quarter of 1975 took pipeline security jobs that paid $1,400 a week. (Dixon, p.192) Apparently the housing shortage experienced in Fairbanks also limited recruitment potential, and state and local police forces suffered staffing shortages. As a result, law enforcement and the protection of public safety and private property was difficult to maintain.

The comments of law enforcement officials in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse regarding the pipeline's impact on local crime should give rise to concern. The draft terms and conditions already indicate that not all workers will be housed in self-contained camps: there is some misunderstanding on the part of police as several of them indicated to our researchers that they believed all workers would be housed in work camps and would not be within the jurisdiction of local police. However, even if all workers were housed in camps, the concept that this isolation of workers would decrease the possibility of crime problems in nearby communities is somewhat naive. It is obvious that more planning, such as that being undertaken by the Corrections Branch in Whitehorse, is needed in all aspects of law enforcement in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

5.9 PIPELINE IMPACT ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

Concern about family life and the safety of women and children, especially younger girls, were the main points raised by informants when speaking with researchers about the potential impact of the pipeline on women and families. Those women familiar with previous construction and development impacts felt responsible for protecting their children from what they knew to be difficult times. Many had heard of changes resulting from pipelines in other communities, and hoped that things would be different in their own town when the pipeline came.

"I am afraid for the kids, I don't want them to be involved in what could happen," said one Whitehorse mother. This was a common view voiced by many of the Whitehorse and Fort Nelson women. A Fort Nelson woman, speaking from her experience of living in various pipeline towns for the past ten years, said what concerned her most was "controlling the environment outside the home in which the kids are involved." She illustrated this concern by stating that her nine year old daughter was presently allowed to go to the library alone, but "when the line is in full swing the kids will have limited access to public places unless accompanied." She worries because she believes there will be increase in traffic and drunk drivers. She does not trust what she called "the unknown character of newcomers," and was worried as well about her children being accosted on the street.

The Fairbanks experience revealed that one of the groups with the most to lose and the least to gain in the pipeline development are the very young. The high cost of living had much to do with this, as older family members often had to find high-paying, time-consuming pipeline work or other employment in order to ensure the economic survival of the family. Families spent less time together as a result. The Fairbanks Survey undertaken by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, commented that "family econmic gains have not been without their costs at both the family and community level. In general, Fairbanks families are spending more time at work, less time together as a family and less time in such recreational activities as movies, social visiting and outdoor sports." (ISER, p.7) Of the families interviewed for the survey, 44 per cent said that the boom situation had forced them to partially sacrifice important family values. (ISER, p.10)

The quantity and quality of childcare in Fairbanks was generally inadequate during the Alaska pipeline construction. Dixon notes that "unless a parent desiring pipeline-related work could prevail upon relatives or friends to care for the children, it was not likely that he or she would be able to find adequate childcare during the long working hours." (Dixon, p.227) Children were sometimes left alone as a result, or placed in inadequate care. The ISER study commented that over a third of families with children used some form of childcare, and 77 per cent of those utilized the "unregulated services of a private babysitter." (ISER, p.9) Population increases and a growing need for women to add to the income of their family will result in an increased strain on childcare facilities in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

Although many teenagers in Fairbanks were happy to do part time work at service jobs vacated by adults looking for pipeline work, high school enrolment dropped. Fewer graduating students sought post-secondary education as lucrative pipeline work and other employment was so easily available. (Dixon, p.170) The number of runaways reported doubled from 1972 to 1975; the greatest increase being among girls. There were also increases in armed robberies, auto thefts and shoplifting among teenagers during pipeline construction times. (Dixon, p.174)

Many women interviewed worried about the impact of excessive numbers of male workers on the female population of their communities. Some were afraid for their daughters and other young girls, others commented on the danger for local women. Recurrent remarks were "the pipeline is potentially bad for teenage girls and I have two of them;" "the pipeline will bring more transients and I am afraid for the young girls." "What will happen to young women, especially native women?" asked one woman, while another graphically commented: "If there are going to be a lot of men in camps without their wives and girl friends, and men being horny like they are, the local girls and wives will suffer the consequences." Neither Fort Nelson or Whitehorse has rape relief centres or birth control clinics.

Some women thought that prostitution would help keep local women safe. A Fort Nelson woman, commenting on the number of men who arrive for winter work each year and knowing of the prostitutes that follow, said the alternative to prostitution was "the oilmen going after town women and young girls." However, a former Fort Nelson resident now living in Whitehorse told our researchers "I know a lot of girls 16 and under who got pregnant in Fort Nelson with all those men on the loose there," so it is not at all clear that prostitution serves as "protection" for local women.

In Fairbanks, where watching prostitutes solicit on 2nd Avenue became a spectator sport enjoyed by some, law enforcement officials said that drugs, violence and pimps followed the prostitutes, and most of the "prostitutes who worked the streets of Fairbanks carried knives in their purses" to protect themselves against violent incidents. (Dixon, p.184)

In order to minimize problems for local women some informants said that all workers must be housed in camps and "at no time should they be let into town." Others pointed out that "you can't keep men prisoners in the camps, if they want to get to town they will, even if it means they lose their job." The most often expressed concern was that "the men in camps will head into town, hit the bars first, and rampage the town."

One woman, referring to one of the results of the construction of the distant early warning system in the 1950's across northern Canada, said "all we need is more D.E.W. line babies." An article in the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs newsmagazine quotes Mr. Harry Dickie of Fort Nelson as he testified to National Energy Board hearings held in Fort St. John in 1977. He said "you have the crews coming into town, and the reserve is only five miles out of town, and a good place for a party, and the girls get mixed up." (Schooner, p.35) His comment that "I am sure everybody thinks a lot of their family circle and likes to keep it that way" was the common concern of all informants.

5.10 PIPELINE IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the course of the interviews for this report, women made clear to our researchers that despite the problems of living in an isolated northern community, they cared very much about their towns. They worried a great deal about the pipeline's impact on that quality of life in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. The possible loss of community spirit and loss of respect for the town were among their main concerns.

A Whitehorse woman said that "a community spirit has existed here and still does, but it is lessening with industrial development. Immediate wants become important and people don't think about sharing and giving. The harmony of the community gets lost." A Fort Nelson woman feared the pipeline would make Fort Nelson "like what happened in Alaska with the drinking and being an all-male town." Others said "the pipeline will crush the small community feeling." They were concerned about people who "come for two years to make money and will make no committment to Whitehorse."

A few women felt that "people will likely get just what they want from the pipeline" and felt that their towns had already gone through so many changes and "the pipeline won't make much difference." Some women felt the pipeline had become a political game and said if people looked at the players they would find people "with their own selfish reason for playing."

Selfishness and greed were words that recurred in the women's statements. A Fort Nelson woman said "greed is ruining our way of life." Another felt the pipeline could change the community economically and socially for the good "if people don't get too greedy." Values changes were questioned: "Will the way of life change drastically when money means more and more?" Changes were already evident to some women who noted that "there is more evident materialism here"and felt their communities were becoming just as consumer-oriented as the south. A Fairbanks citizen, the former borough planning and zoning director, commented "I am concerned about the greed that this community (Fairbanks) is showing," he said, "and that greed is probably worst in the people who have been here the longest...it's not the pipeliners, it's not the newcomers, it's the people who have been here 5,10, 15, 20 years." (Dixon, p.141)

"As a result of changes in its macroenvironment through the event of pipeline construction," writes Dixon, "Fairbanks changed its political structure, social structure, residence patterns and family structure." (Dixon, p.288)

Women interviewed for this report understood that change was inevitable in any community, especially in communities located in resource rich areas of the country where economic development was occurring. While understanding the necessity and inevitability of change, the women hoped it would not be negative change. They do not want to lose the special aspects of life in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse that they and their families enjoy.

Two statements summarize the community concerns of our informants. A Fort Nelson woman said she likes the town the way it is now - "it's a nice small northern town where you know everybody." And a Whitehorse woman said she didn't want her town to be "another Toronto - the Yukon should grow and develop without sacrificing its unique aspects."

5.11 SUMMARY - WOMEN AND THE PIPELINE

Women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are already thinking about the impact the Alaska Highway gas pipeline will have on their community, themselves and their family. Nearly everyone expects some kind of change to occur that will effect them - whether it is an increase in their rent, higher cost of living, less safety in the community, more shopping facilities, or work for local people. Many cite recent increases in the cost of real estate, and longer line-ups in banks and stores as indicators of pre-pipeline construction impact.

Women think the pipeline will have a negative effect on the community spirit of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse. They know there will be an increase in the number of transient people looking for work, and they resent the possibility that much of the pipeline work will be done by outsiders with no committment to the ongoing development of Fort Nelson or Whitehorse. They want people to respect their towns, and they worry that the opportunity to make a lot of money will change the values of present residents as well. They are not anti-pipeline, they are anti boom-bust development. Women want local input into pipeline impact planning, and they want services provided and improved for local residents first of all.

At present, there is little evidence of pipeline planning on the part of governments, institutions, businesses and services. It is entirely possible that the concerns women now raise as potential problems will become very real problems and the present situation will get worse as the construction of the pipeline begins.

In terms of employment for women, the expectations of women in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse is that pipeline spin-off work will create opportunities for women in the traditional service and clerical fields. Many informants believe that few women will apply for pipeline work because they know few women have the necessary skills to work on the pipeline and there are no opportunities to acquire those skills. Nor do the women foresee any such training being available in the future. They do not see any committment on the part of the Northern Pipeline Agency, or Foothills, to produce training programs which will effectively meet the special training needs of women, - although women have been cited as a special target group for employment possibilities. In addition if current problems with standards and availability of childcare increase with a larger population, women will face an added barrier to employment.

In terms of pipeline work for the community, Fort Nelson women want qualified local workers to have the first opportunity at direct pipeline work. They also want a residency requirement similar to that in the Yukon whereby an influx of transient workers from the "outside" is avoided. They state very strongly that local people and the local economy should benefit from money being made on the Alaska Highway gas pipeline.

To date, there is no committment to ensure the local; hire of qualified northeastern B.C. residents; the situation regarding union or non-union hire has not been clarified; and there are no training programs in place for women, Indian people or others in need. It is thus easy to project that there will be minimal employment of local residents, including women and Indians, on the Alaska Highway gas pipeline as a result.

The combination of big money and big development will put a strain on people and a strain on local services. This strain will manifest itself in two ways; present services, such as schools and hospitals, will be hard-pressed to handle the expected population increase construction will bring, and there will be an increased need for support services such as marriage counselling, mental health services, transition houses and crisis lines. This need will occur because of the added strain on individuals and families caused by financial difficulties and the change in community values that accompanies large developments in small communities.

Very few representatives of medical, educational and social service departments and organizations in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse were able to describe any projected pipeline impact plans. Most have not had contact with the Northern Pipeline Agency or Foothills. Many of these services and organizations are crowded, overworked and understaffed at the present time. It is clear the needs of the community will continue to be unfilled and will be aggravated by the pipeline's impact.

Informants state crime will increase because of the pipeline's construction. Many are concerned there will be more incidents of rape and vandalism. There is concern that organized crime and drug use will increase. Women worry about their safety and the safety of their daughters and other young girls when the workers leave the work camps and come into town for a night off. They also worry about the effect on their children of what they already see as a speedy boom town environment. Some families are making plans to move away for the duration of pipeline construction, others are watching the situation closely.

Police in each community state that crime is already increasing: they attribute this increase to, in part, outsiders coming into town. However, they also say they believe that pipeline workers will be housed in work-camps and therefore their impact on the community will be minimal. This is a dangerous underestimation.

Whitehorse women state recent increases in the cost of housing are due to pipeline speculation. Fort Nelson women are not at all sure how the present critical housing shortage will be met, much less how the community can deal with further housing demands. Both communities are concerned about the proximity of work camps to the town, and the location and servicing of housing facilities for those workers not accommodated in work camps.

Pipeline construction will increase the cost of living in Fort Nelson and Whitehorse because of increased marketplace speculation and an inflationary wage spiral. Some women say they will have to move away if the cost of living goes beyond what they and their families can afford. Others are considering the possibilty of adding another wage earner to the family, or seeking out pipeline work in order to survive economically and stay in the community.

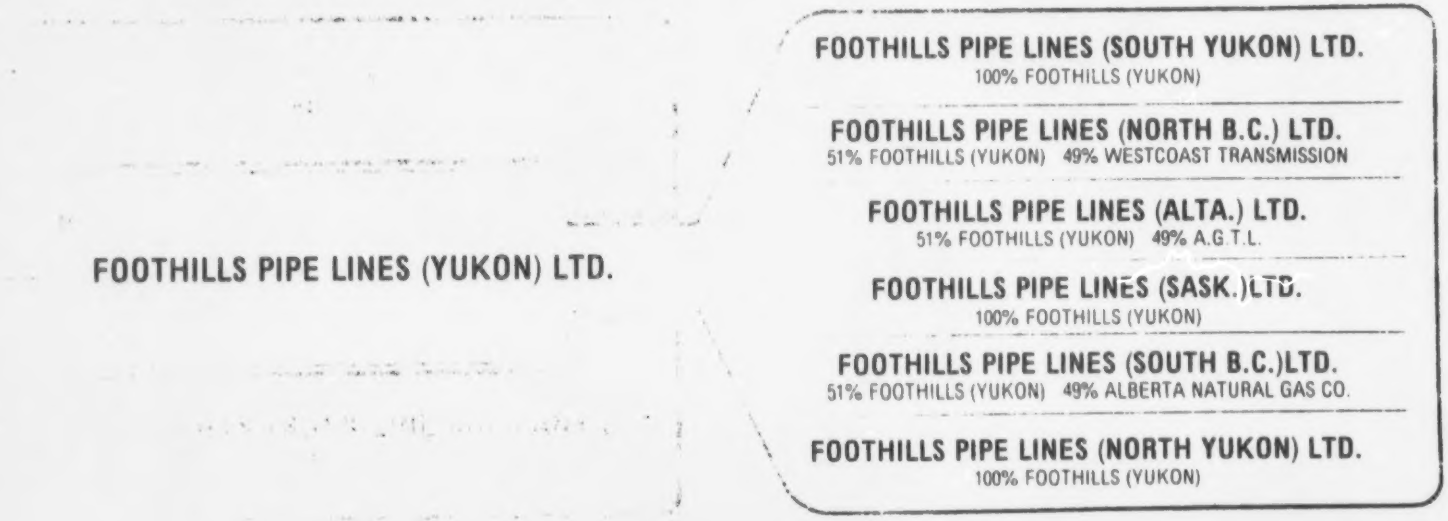
While women hope the pipeline will bring more businesses and better shopping to Whitehorse and Fort Nelson, they also want local business people to have the opportunity to expand rather than having outsiders come in and set up business only for the duration of construction. However, the evidence is that local businesses may not expand because of the 'bust' they fear will follow the boom. It may be that the population will increase with the pipeline, but the delivery of goods and services will not.

In short, the amount of mitigative pipeline planning encouraged and undertaken by all levels of government and by businesses and local organizations is minimal. The women of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse are already trying to provide for themselves and their families, and they hope the pipeline will bring benefits and opportunity to the community and its people. They understand how the development of northern Canada has been based on the extraction of natural resources in order to satisfy the requirements of industrial and economic growth in the south . They also know the Alaska Highway gas pipeline cannot be seen in isolation - that it is the opening of an energy corridor that will bring oil pipelines, hydro development and more roads. They understand the cumulative effect of this kind of development, and know the impact such development will have on their community and the people who live there. What they do not accept is the premise that development should occur regardless of community needs, without local input to development plans, and without consideration of its impact on the lives of the women and families of Fort Nelson and Whitehorse.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY GAS PIPELINE PROJECT OWNERSHIP



FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (YUKON) LTD.

FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (SOUTH YUKON) LTD.
100% FOOTHILLS (YUKON)

FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (NORTH B.C.) LTD.
51% FOOTHILLS (YUKON) 49% WESTCOAST TRANSMISSION

FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (ALTA.) LTD.
51% FOOTHILLS (YUKON) 49% A.G.T.L.

FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (SASK.) LTD.
100% FOOTHILLS (YUKON)

FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (SOUTH B.C.) LTD.
51% FOOTHILLS (YUKON) 49% ALBERTA NATURAL GAS CO.

FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (NORTH YUKON) LTD.
100% FOOTHILLS (YUKON)

APPENDIX B

THE NORTHERN PIPELINE AGENCY

On February 3, 1978, the Northern Pipeline Act, Bill C-25, was introduced into the House of Commons for first reading. On April 11, 1978, after two months of debate in the House and in committee, the bill was passed. The Northern Pipeline Agency, created by the passage of Bill C-25, is the federal body responsible for carrying out the objects of the Act, which are stated as follows:

(a) to carry out and give effect to this Agreement:
(b) to carry out, through the Agency, federal responsibilites to the pipeline;
(c) to facilitate the efficient and expeditious planning and construction of the pipeline taking into account local and regional interests, the interests of the residents, particularly the native people, and recognizing the responsibilities of the government of Canada, and other governments, as appropriate, to ensure that any native claim related to the land on which the pipeline to be situated is dealt with in a just and equitable manner;
(d) to facilitate, in relation to the pipeline, consultation and co-ordination with the governments of the Provinces, the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories;
(e) to maximize the social and economic benefits from the construction and operation of the pipeline including the maximizing of the opportunities for employment of Canadians while at the same time minimizing any adverse effect on the social and environmental conditions of the areas most directly affected by the pipeline; and
(f) to advance national economic and energy interests and and to maximize related industrial benefits by ensuring the highest possible degree of Canadian participation in all aspects of the planning and construction of, and procurement for, the pipeline while ensuring that the procurement of goods and services for the pipeline will be on generally competitive terms.

The Northern Pipeline Agency has its policy headquarters in Ottawa, operational headquarters in Calgary and branch offices in Whitehorse and Vancouver. In late 1978 a Fort

Nelson resident was hired on a contract basis to act as the Agency's field liaison for northeastern British Columbia.

The Northern Pipeline Agency has released several drafts of socio-economic and environmental terms and conditions for all segments of the pipeline, and has instigated public hearings into those terms and conditions. Yukon public hearings were held during the spring of 1979, and British Columbia public hearings in the winter of 1979. The Agency appointed 8 people to the Yukon Advisory Council in early 1979. The Council's mandate is to act on behalf of the Territory, to advise the Northern Pipeline Agency, and to voice Yukoners' concerns regarding the pipeline. A similar body has been suggested for northern British Columbia but was not in existence at the time of writing.

APPENDIX C

AIDE MEMOIRE UTILIZED BY INTERVIEWERS

CODE NAME ____________ INTERVIEWER ____________________

CODE ADDRESS ________ DATE ____________________

PLACE ____________________

TIME - START ____________________

FINISH ____________________

NUMBER OF CONTACTS - PHONE ____________________

LETTER ____________________

OTHER ____________________

RELATIONSHIP TO INTERVIEWER ____________________

WHY CHOSEN ____________________

HOW LONG AT THIS ADDRESS ____________________

HOW LONG IN TOWN ____________________

HOW LONG IN AREA ____________________

FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD MAKE-UP ____________________

HEARD ABOUT PROJECT FROM ____________________

INTEREST IN PROJECT ____________________

COMMENTS ____________________

AGE GROUP 16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-64 senior citizen

Education ____________________

Family income - 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, over 20

Children's age group - pre school, elementary, middle school, high school, left home.

KEY ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED - Housing, Employment, Education, Health Services, Transportation, Shopping, Recreation, Social Services, Childcare, Crime, Community.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN IN FORT NELSON AND WHITEHORSE - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	FORT NELSON	WHITEHORSE	TOTAL
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS	57	59	116
WOMEN WITH PARTNER, NO CHILDREN, UNEMPLOYED	-	3	3
WOMEN WITH PARTNER, NO CHILDREN, EMPLOYED	5	11	16
WOMEN WITH PARTNER, CHILDREN, UNEMPLOYED	18	7	25
WOMEN WITH PARTNER, CHILDREN, EMPLOYED	24	15	39
SINGLE WOMEN, LIVING ALONE	6	7	13
SINGLE WOMEN, SHARING ACCOMMODATION, OR AT HOME	2	13	15
SINGLE PARENT WOMEN	2	3	5

AGES OF WOMEN INTERVIEWED

Age group	Number
16-24	17
25-34	60
35-44	26
45-64	10
65 & over	3

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE OF INFORMANTS

	Fort Nelson	Whitehorse
Under 1 yr.	8	11
1-5 yrs.	18	30
5-10 yrs.	16	7
10-15 yrs.	4	4
15-20 yrs.	3	3
all their life	8	4
	57	59

APPENDIX E

CONTACTS MADE BY RESEARCHERS DURING PHASE II OF RESEARCH PROJECT

FORT NELSON

Adine Wong, Court Clerk, Provincial Court Services, Fort Nelson
Sergeant Blair, RCMP Detachment, Fort Nelson
Jim London, Principal, Fort Nelson Secondary School
Al Morton, Principal, Nan Streeper Middle School
Mary Dvorak, Principal, G.W.Carlson Elementary School
Charlene Eggers, Parents Interested in Education Group
Mike Chambers, Secretary Treasurer, Fort Nelson School Board
Paul McMuldroch, Director of Instruction, School District 81 & 87 (Fort Nelson-Stikine)
Dave Lynn, Superintendent of Schools, School District 81 & 87 (Fort Nelson-Stikine)
Joey Steinke, Native Courtworker, Fort Nelson-Liard Friendship Centre
Marlene Fanning, Project Manager, Dene-thah Local Employment Assistance Project
Audrey Greer, Manager, Canada Employment Centre, Fort Nelson
Ellen Zeebeck, Secretary, Fort Nelson Chamber of Commerce
Wally Braul, Regional District Planner, Peace River-Liard Regional District
Dietger Hollman, Planner, Village of Fort Nelson
Mahon Enterprises
Yvonne Collinson, Owner, Yvonne's Shoes
Robert Dennstedt, C.A.
Judith Kenyon, Editor, Fort Nelson News
Dr. A. Kenyon, Fort Nelson Medical Clinic
Bob Tarney, Administrator, Fort Nelson General Hospital
Fort Nelson Daycare Society
Fort Nelson Women's Centre

Cliff Prowse, Building Inspector, Village of Fort Nelson
Gordon Dedels, Liard Agencies
Edith Clark, Public Health Nurse, Fort Nelson
Dorothea Geddert, Supervisor, Ministry of Human Resources
Office, Fort Nelson
Gail Kiraly, Nursing Director, Fort Nelson General Hospital
Darryl Koskimaki, Provincial Government Agent, Fort Nelson

CONTACTS MADE BY RESEARCHERS DURING PHASE II OF RESEARCH PROJECT

WHITEHORSE

Diane Gow, Marjorie Taylor, Co-directors, Mickey Mouse Daycare
Judy Kleczkowski, President, Yukon Child Care Association
Bernd Schmidt, Vice-President, Yukon Child Care Association
Millie Solowaniuk, Family Day Home Operator, Whitehorse
Anne Lise Boyer, Child Care and Assessment Update project, Whitehorse
Peter McGregor, Supervisor, Community and Family Services, Department of Human Resources, YTG
Lois Hawkins, Chairperson, Whitehorse Transit Commission
Wenda Nairns, Manager, Whitehorse Mini-Bus System
Al Vance, Manager, Sales and Service, Canadian Pacific Airlines, Whitehorse
Don Palamar, Manager, Food Fair, Whitehorse
Jim Eby, Manager, Kelly Douglas Co. Ltd, Whitehorse
Dermot Flynn, Manager, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Milner, Owner, Riverside Grocery, Whitehorse
Jean Morris, Co-ordinator, Whitehorse Branch, Consumers Association of Canada
Peter Dave, Past President, Whitehorse Co-op
Bill Albert, Supervisor, Special Education Services, Department of Education, YTG
Yukon Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
Yukon Association for the Mentally Retarded
Archives Staff, Library Services, YTG
Kim Zapf, Chief Probation Officer, Department of Justice, YTG
Jeff Choy-Hee, Executive Director, Yukon Native Courtworker Services, Whitehorse
Sergeant Presunka, Statistician, RCMP Detachment, Whitehorse
Sergeant Dennis Levy, RCMP Detachment, Whitehorse

Constable Doug Hopaluk, RCMP Detachment, Whitehorse
Constable Larry Busch, RCMP Detachment, Whitehorse
Barbara Preston, Information Officer, Department of Indian Affairs, Whitehorse
Brian Noble, Recreation Director, City of Whitehorse
Ms. Irene Sova, Department of Recreation, City of Whitehorse
Henry Klassen, President, Yukon Arts Council, Whitehorse
Sheila Benson, Co-ordinator, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Whitehorse
Patricia Cormie, Yukon Hostelling Association, Whitehorse
Tom Duncan, Director, Department of Health, YTG
Jim Pollack, Administrator, Medical Clinic, Whitehorse
Dick Avison, Director, Medical Services Branch, Northern Health Services, Health and Welfare Canada
Sharon Roe, Mental Health Nurse, Medical Services Branch, Northern Health Services, Health and Welfare Canada
Pat Kehoe, Psychologist, Medical Services Branch, Northern Health Services, Health and Welfare Canada
Bill Cline, Chief of Alcohol and Drug Services, YTG
Donna Wilkinson, Childbirth Educator, Whitehorse
Pam Clarkson, Betty Tomlinson, Information Desk, YTG
Staff of Whitehorse Public Library, YTG
Stanley Associates Engineering Ltd, Whitehorse
Ernest Standish, Director, Canada Employment & Immigration
Bev Gosse, Women's Co-ordinator, Canada Employment & Immigration, Centre, Whitehorse
John Reid, Principal, Vocational and Technical Training Centre, Whitehorse
Dan Roberts, Director, Adult Education, YTG
Duncan Sinclair, Manpower Planning Co-ordinator, YTG
Larry Turner, Manager, Yukon Housing Corporation
Dave Kingsley, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Office, Whitehorse
Stu Muir, Manager, Whitehorse Housing Authority
Diane Brown, Manager, 4th Avenue Residence, Whitehorse
Christine Smith, Aurora Realty, Whitehorse

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